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Theologia Germanica.

STRONG Son of God, Immortal Love,
Whom we, that have not ſeen thy face,
By faith, and faith alone embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove.

* * * * *

Thou ſeemeſt human and divine,
The higheſt, holieſt manhood Thou;
Our wills are ours, we know not how,
Our wills are ours to make them Thine.

* * * * *

O Living Will that ſhalt endure,
When all that ſeems ſhall ſuffer ſhock,
Riſe in the ſpiritual Rock,
Flow through our deeds and make them pure.

That we may lift from out the duſt,
A voice as unto him that hears,
A cry above the conquered years,
To one that with us works, and truſt

With faith that comes of ſelf-control
The truths that never can be proved,
Until we cloſe with all we loved
And all we flow from, ſoul in ſoul.

TENNYSON.

Theologia Germanica:

Which setteth forth many fair Lineaments of divine Truth, and saith very lofty and lovely things touching a perfect Life.

EDITED BY DR. PFEIFFER FROM THE ONLY COMPLETE MANUSCRIPT YET KNOWN.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN BY

SUSANNA WINKWORTH.

With a PREFACE by the Rev. CHARLES KINGSLEY, Rector of Eversley, and a LETTER to the Translator by the CHEVALIER BUNSEN, D.D., D.C.L., &c.

LONDON:
LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, AND LONGMANS.
1854.

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PREFACE.

TO thoſe who really hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs; and who therefore long to know what righteouſneſs is, that they may copy it: To thoſe who long to be freed, not merely from the puniſhment of ſin after they die, but from ſin itſelf while they live on earth; and who therefore wiſh to know what ſin is, that they may avoid it: To thoſe who wiſh to be really juſtified by faith, by being made juſt perſons by faith; and who cannot ſatisfy either their conſciences or reaſons by fancying that God looks

on them as right, when they know themſelves to be wrong, or that the God of truth will ſtoop to fictions (miſcalled forenſic) which would be conſidered falſe and unjuſt in any human court of law: To thoſe who cannot help truſting that union with Chriſt muſt be ſomething real and ſubſtantial, and not merely a metaphor, and a flower of rhetoric: To thoſe, laſtly, who cannot help ſeeing that the doctrine of Chriſt in every man, as the Indwelling Word of God, The Light who lights every one who comes into the world, is no peculiar tenet of the Quakers, but one which runs through the whole of the Old and New Teſtaments, and without which they would both be unintelligible, juſt as the ſame doctrine runs through the whole hiſtory of the Early Church for thefirſt two centu-

ries, and is the only explanation of them;—To all theſe this noble little book will recommend itſelf; and may God bleſs the reading of it to them, and to all others no leſs.

As for its orthodoxy; to "evangelical" Chriſtians Martin Luther's own words ought to be ſufficient warrant. For he has ſaid that he owed more to this, than to any other book, ſaving the Bible and Saint Auguſtine. Thoſe on the other hand, to whom Luther's name does not ſeem a ſufficient guarantee, muſt recollect, that the Author of this book was a knight of the Teutonic order; one who conſidered himſelf, and was conſidered, as far as we know, by his contemporaries, an orthodox member of the Latin Church; that his friends and diſciples were principally monks exerciſing a great influence

in the Catholic Church of their days; that one of their leaders was appointed by Pope John XXII. Nuncio, and overſeer of the Dominican order in Germany; and that during the hundred and ſeventy years which elapſed between the writing of this book and the Reformation, it incurred no eccleſiaſtical cenſure whatſoever, in generations which were but too fond of making men offenders for a word.

Not that I agree with all which is to be found in this book. It is for its noble views of righteouſneſs and of ſin that I honour it, and rejoice at ſeeing it publiſhed in Engliſh, now for the firſt time from an edition baſed on the perfect manuſcript. But even in thoſe points in which I ſhould like to ſee it altered, I am well aware that there are ſtrong authorities againſt me. The

very expreſſion, for inſtance, which moſt ſtartles me, "*vergottet*," deified or made divine, is uſed, word for word, both by Saint Athanaſe and Saint Auguſtine, the former of whom has ſaid: "He became man, that we might be made God;"* and the latter, "He called men Gods, as being deified by His grace, not as born of His ſubſtance."† There are many paſſages, moreover, in the Epiſtles of the Apoſtles, which, if we paraphraſe them at all, we can hardly paraphraſe in weaker words. It ſeems to me ſafer and wiſer to cling to the letter of Scripture: but God forbid that I ſhould wiſh to make ſuch a man as

* Αὐτὸς ἐπηνθρώπησεν ἵνα ἡμεῖς θεοποιηθῶμεν. Athan. Orat. de Incarn. Verbi. Tom. i. page 108.

† Homines dixit Deos, ex gratiâ ſuâ *deificatos*; non de ſubſtantiâ ſuâ natos. Aug. in Pſalm. xlix. (Ed Bened. Tom. iv. page 414.)

the Author of the Theologia Germanica an offender for a word!

One point more may be worthy of remark. In many obſcure paſſages of this book, words are uſed, both by the Author and by the Tranſlator, in their ſtrict, original, and ſcientific meaning, as they are uſed in the Creeds, and not in that meaning which has of late crept into our very pulpits, under the influence of Locke's philoſophy. When, for inſtance, it is ſaid that God is the Subſtance of all things; this expreſſion, in the vulgar Lockite ſenſe of ſubſtance, would mean that God is the matter or ſtuff of which all things are made; which would be the groſſeſt Pantheiſm: but "Subſtance" in the true and ancient meaning of the word, as it appears in the Athanaſian Creed, ſignifies the very oppoſite; namely, that which

ſtands under the appearance and the matter; that by virtue of which a thing has its form, its life, its real exiſtence, as far as it may have any; and thus in aſſerting that God is the Subſtance of all things, this book means that every thing (except ſin, which is no thing, but the diſeaſe and fall of a thing) is a thought of God.

So again with Eternity. It will be found in this book to mean not merely ſome future endleſs duration, but that ever-preſent moral world, governed by ever-living and abſolutely neceſſary laws, in which we and all ſpirits are now; and in which we ſhould be equally, whether time and ſpace, extenſion and duration, and the whole material univerſe to which they belong, became nothing this moment, or laſted endleſſly.

I think it neceſſary to give theſe cautions, becauſe by the light of Locke's philoſophy, little or nothing will be diſcerned in this book, and what little is diſcerned, will probably be utterly miſunderſtood. If any man wiſhes to ſee clearly what is herein written, let him try to forget all popular modern dogmas and ſyſtems, all popular philoſophies (falſely ſo called), and be true to the letter of his Bible, and to the inſtincts which the Indwelling Word of God was wont to awaken in his heart, while he was yet a little unſophiſticated child; and then let him be ſure that he will find in this book germs of wider and deeper wiſdom than its good author ever dreamed of; and that thoſe great ſpiritual laws, which the Author only applies and that often inconſiſtently, to an aſcetic

and paſſively contemplative life, will hold juſt as good in the family, in the market, in the ſenate, in the ſtudy, ay, in the battle-field itſelf; and teach him the way to lead, in whatſoever ſtation of life he may be placed, a truly manlike, becauſe a truly Chriſtlike and Godlike life.

CHARLES KINGSLEY.

Torquay,
Lent, 1854.

Hiſtorical Introduction.

BY THE TRANSLATOR.

THE Treatiſe before us was diſcovered by Luther, who firſt brought it into notice by an Edition of it which he publiſhed in 1516. A Second Edition, which came out two years later, he introduced with the following Preface :—

" We read that St. Paul, though he was of a weak and contemptible preſence, yet wrote weighty and powerful letters, and he boaſts of himſelf that his ' ſpeech is not with enticing words of man's device,' but ' full of the riches

of all knowledge and wiſdom.' And if we conſider the wondrous ways of God, it is clear, that He hath never choſen mighty and eloquent preachers to ſpeak His word, but as it is written: 'Out of the mouths of babes and ſucklings haſt thou perfected praiſe,' Ps. viii. 2. And again, 'For wiſdom opened the mouth of the dumb, and made the tongues of them that cannot ſpeak eloquent,' Wiſdom x. 21. Again, He blameth ſuch as are high-minded and are offended at theſe ſimple ones. *Conſilium inopis*, &c. 'Ye have made a mock at the counſel of the poor, becauſe he putteth his truſt in the Lord,' Pſ. xiv. 6.

"This I ſay becauſe I will have every one warned who readeth this little book, that he ſhould not take offence, to his own hurt, at its bad German, or its crabbed and uncouth words. For this

noble book, though it be poor and rude in words, is so much the richer and more precious in knowledge and divine wisdom. And I will say, though it be boasting of myself and 'I speak as a fool,' that next to the Bible and St. Augustine, no book hath ever come into my hands, whence I have learnt, or would wish to learn more of what God, and Christ, and man and all things are; and now I first find the truth of what certain of the learned have said in scorn of us theologians of Wittemberg, that we would be thought to put forward new things, as though there had never been men elsewhere and before our time. Yea, verily, there have been men, but God's wrath, provoked by our sins, hath not judged us worthy to see and hear them; for it is well known that for a long time past such things have not been

treated of in our univerſities; nay, it has gone ſo far, that the Holy Word of God is not only laid on the ſhelf, but is almoſt mouldered away with duſt and moths. Let as many as will, read this little book, and then ſay whether Theology is a new or an old thing among us; for this book is not new. But if they ſay as before, that we are but German theologians, we will not deny it. I thank God, that I have heard and found my God in the German tongue, as neither I nor they have yet found him in the Latin, Greek, or Hebrew tongue. God grant that this book may be ſpread abroad, then we ſhall find that the German theologians are without doubt the beſt theologians.

(Signed, without date,)

Dr. MARTIN LUTHER,
AUGUSTINIAN of Wittemberg."

Theſe words of Luther will probably be conſidered to form a ſufficient juſtification for an attempt to preſent the Theologia Germanica in an Engliſh dreſs. When Luther ſent it forth, its effort to revive the conſciouſneſs of ſpiritual life was received with enthuſiaſm by his fellow-countrymen, in whom that life was then breaking with volcanic energy through the clods of formaliſm and hypocriſy, with which the Romiſh Church had ſought to ſtifle its fires. No fewer than ſeventeen editions of the work appeared during the lifetime of Luther. Up to the preſent day, it has continued to be a favourite handbook of devotion in Germany, where it has paſſed through certainly as many as ſixty Editions, and it has alſo been widely circulated in France and the Netherlands, by means of Latin, French, and Flemiſh tranſlations.

To the queſtion, who was the author of a book which has exerted ſo great an influence, no anſwer can be given, all the various endeavours to diſcover him having proved fruitleſs. Till within the laſt few years, Luther was our ſole authority for the text of the work, but, about 1850, a Manuſcript of it was diſcovered at Wurtzburg, by Profeſſor Reuſs, the librarian of the Univerſity there, which has ſince been publiſhed verbatim by Profeſſor Pfeiffer, of Prague. This Manuſcript dates from 1497; conſequently it is ſomewhat older than Luther's time, and it alſo contains ſome paſſages not found in his editions. As upon careful compariſon, it ſeemed to the Tranſlator indiſputably ſuperior to the beſt modern editions baſed upon Luther's, it has been ſelected as the groundwork of the preſent tranſlation,

merely correcting from the former, one or two paſſages which appeared to contain errors of the preſs, or more likely of the tranſcriber's pen. The paſſages not found in Luther's edition are here encloſed between brackets.

As has been ſtated, the author of the Theologia Germanica is unknown; but it is evident from his whole caſt of thought, as well as from a Preface attached to the Wurtzburg Manuſcript, that he belonged to a claſs of men who ſprang up in Southern Germany at the beginning of the fourteenth century, and who were diſtinguiſhed for their earneſt piety and their practical belief in the preſence of the Spirit of God with all Chriſtians, laity as well as clergy.

Theſe men had fallen upon evil times. Their age was not indeed one of thoſe periods in which the vigour of the no-

bler powers of the ſoul is enfeebled by the abundance of material proſperity and phyſical enjoyment, nor yet one of thoſe in which they are utterly cruſhed out under the hoof of oppreſſion and miſery; but it was an age in which conflicting elements were wildly ſtruggling for the maſtery. The higheſt ſpiritual and temporal authorities were at deadly ſtrife with each other and among themſelves; and in their conteſts, there were few provinces or towns that did not repeatedly ſuffer the horrors of war. The deſolation cauſed by its ravages, was however ſpeedily repaired during the intervals of peace, by the extraordinary energy which the German nation diſplayed in that bloom of its manhood; ſo that times of deep miſery and great proſperity rapidly alternated with each other. But on the whole,

during the firſt half of this century, the ſenſe of the calamities, which were continually recurring, predominated over the recollection of the calmer years, which were barely ſufficient to allow breathing time between the ſucceſſive waves that threatened to overwhelm ſocial order and happineſs.

The unqueſtioning faith and honeſt enthuſiaſm which had prompted the Cruſades, no longer burnt with the ſame fierce ardour, for the unhappy iſſue of thoſe ſacred enterpriſes, and the ſcandalous worldly ambition of the heads of the Church, had moderated its fervour and ſaddened the hearts of true believers. Yet the one Catholic, Chriſtian creed ſtill held an undivided and very real ſovereignty over men's minds, and the ſupremacy of the Church in things ſpiritual was never queſtioned, though

many were beginning to feel that it was needful for the State to have an independent authority in things temporal, and the queſtion was warmly agitated how much of the ſpiritual authority reſided in the Pope and how much in the biſhops and doctors of the Church. But in whichever way the diſpute between theſe rival claims might be adjuſted, the reverence for the *office* of the clergy remained unimpaired. The caſe was very different with the reverence for their *perſons*, which had fallen to a very low ebb, owing to the worldlineſs and immorality of their lives. This again was much encouraged by the conduct of the Popes, who, in their zeal to eſtabliſh worldly dominion, made eccleſiaſtical appointments rather with a view to gain political adherents, or to acquire wealth by the ſale

of benefices, than with a regard to the fitneſs of the men ſelected, or the welfare of the people committed to their charge.

On the whole, it was an age of faith, though by no means of a blind, unreaſoning taking things for granted. On the contrary, the evidences of extreme activity of mind meet us on every hand, in the monuments of its literature, architecture, and invention. A few facts ſtrikingly illuſtrate the divergent tendencies of thought and public opinion. Thus we may remember, how it was currently reported that the profligate Pope Boniface VIII. was privately an unbeliever, even deriding the idea of the immortality of the ſoul, at the very time when he was maintaining againſt Philip the Fair, the right of the Pope to ſit, as Chriſt's repreſentative, in judg-

ment on the living and the dead, and to take the ſword of temporal power out of the hands of thoſe who miſuſed it.* Whether this accuſation was true or not, it is a remarkable ſign of the times that it ſhould have been widely believed.

Some years later, and when the increaſed corruptneſs of the clergy, after the removal of the Papal Court to Avignon, provoked ſtill louder complaints, we ſee the religious and patriotic Emperor, Louis IV., accuſing John XXII. of hereſy, in a public aſſembly held in the ſquare of St. Peter's at Rome, and ſetting up another Pope "in order to pleaſe the Roman people." But though the new Pope was every

* Neander's "*Kirchengeſchichte.*" Band 6, S. 15, 20. This work and Schmitz's "*Johannes Tauler von Straſburg,*" are the authorities for moſt of the facts here mentioned.

way fitted, by his unblemiſhed character and aſcetic manners, to gain a hold on public eſteem, we ſee that the Emperor could not maintain him againſt the legitimately elected Pope, who, from his ſeat at Avignon, had power to haraſs the Emperor ſo greatly with his interdicts, that the latter, finding all efforts at conciliation fruitleſs, would have bought peace by unconditional ſubmiſſion, had not the Eſtates of the Empire refuſed to yield to ſuch humiliation. Yet we find this very Pope obliged to yield and retract his opinions on a point of dogmatic theology. He had in a certain treatiſe propounded the opinion that the ſouls of the pious would not be admitted to the immediate viſion of the Deity until after the day of Judgment. The King of France, in 1433, called an aſſembly of Prelates

and theologians at his palace at Vincennes, where he invited them to diſcuſs before him the two queſtions, whether the ſouls of departed ſaints would be admitted to an immediate viſion of the Deity before the reſurrection; and whether, if ſo, their viſion would be of the ſame or of a different kind after the Judgment Day? The theological faculty having come to concluſions differing in ſome reſpects from thoſe of the Pope, the King threatened the latter with the ſtake as a heretic, unleſs he retracted; and John XXII. iſſued a bull, declaring that what he had ſaid or written, ought only to be received in ſo far as it agreed with the Catholic Faith, the Church and Holy Scripture. No circumſtance, perhaps, offers a more remarkable ſpectacle to us in its contraſt with the ſpirit of our own times. At the

preſent moment, when the Pope could not ſit for a day in ſafety on his temporal throne without the defence of French or Auſtrian bayonets, we can ſcarcely conceive an Emperor of France or Auſtria taking upon himſelf to convene an aſſembly of Catholic theologians, and the latter pronouncing a cenſure on the dogmas propounded by the Head of the Church! It would be hard to ſay whether the Sovereigns of the preſent day would be more amuſed by the abſurdity of devoting their time to ſuch diſcuſſions, or the conſciences of good Catholics more ſhocked at the preſumption of ſuch a verdict.

Still it muſt not be forgotten that the importance of religious affairs in that age muſt not be aſcribed too excluſively to earneſtneſs about religion itſelf, for the eccleſiaſtical intereſt predominated over

the purely religious. The Pope and the Emperor repreſented the two great antagoniſtic powers, ſpiritual and temporal, the rivalry between which abſorbed into itſelf all the political and ſocial queſtions that could then be agitated. The queſtion of allegiance to the Pope or the Emperor was like the conteſt between royaliſm and republicaniſm; the Ghibelline called himſelf a patriot, and was called by his adverſary, the Guelf, a worldly man or even an infidel, while he retorted by calling the Guelf a betrayer of his country, and an enemy of national liberties.

We cannot help ſeeing, however, that in thoſe days both princes and people, wicked as their lives often were, did really believe in the Chriſtian religion, and that while much of the mythological, and much of the formaliſtic element

mingled in their zeal for outward obſervances, there was alſo much thoroughly ſincere enthuſiaſm among them. But both the great powers oppreſſed the people, which looked alternately to the one ſide or the other for emancipation from the particular grievances felt to be moſt galling at any given moment or place. In the frightful moral and phyſical condition of ſociety, it was no wonder that a deſpair of Providence ſhould have begun to attack ſome minds, which led to materialiſtic ſcepticiſm, while others ſought for help on the path of wild ſpeculation. The latter appears to have been the caſe with the Beghards or "Brothers and Siſters of the Free Spirit," who attempted to inſtitute a reform by withdrawing the people altogether from the influence of the clergy, but whoſe followers after a

time too often fell into the vices of the prieſts from whom they had ſeparated themſelves. In 1317, we find the Biſhop of Ochſenſtein complaining that Alſace was filled with theſe Beghards, who appear to have been a kind of antinomian pantheiſts, teaching that the Spirit is bound by no law, and annihilating the diſtinction between the Creator and the creature. Both in their excellences and defects they remind us of the modern "German Catholics," and of ſome, too, of the recent Proteſtant ſchools in Germany. There ſeems to have been no party of profeſſed unbelievers, but that ſome individuals were ſuch in word as well as deed, appears from what Ruyſbroch of Bruſſels,* (1300-1330) ſays of thoſe "who live

* As quoted by Neander. *Kirchengeſchichte*, B. 6. S. 769.

in mortal ſin, not troubling themſelves about God or his grace, but thinking virtue ſheer nonſenſe, and the ſpiritual life hypocriſy or deluſion; and hearing with diſguſt all mention of God or virtue, for they are perſuaded that there is no ſuch thing as God, or Heaven, or Hell; for they acknowledge nothing but what is palpable to the ſenſes."

The early part of the fourteenth century ſaw Germany divided for nine years between the rival claims of two Emperors, Frederick of Auſtria, ſupported by Pope John XXII. and a faction in Germany, and Louis of Bavaria, whoſe cauſe was eſpouſed by a majority of the Princes of the Empire, as that of the defender of the dignity and independence of the State, and the champion of reform within the Church. The death of Frederick in 1322, left

Louis the undiſputed Emperor, as far as nearly all his ſubjects were concerned, and he would fain have purchaſed peace with the Pope on any reaſonable terms, that he might apply himſelf to the internal improvement of his dominions; but John XXII. was implacable, and continued to wage againſt him and his adherents a deadly warfare, not cloſed until his ſucceſſor Charles IV. ſubmitted to all the papal demands, and to every indignity impoſed upon him.

One of the moſt fearful conſequences of the enmity between John XXII. and Louis of Bavaria, to the unfortunate ſubjects of the latter, was the Interdict under which his dominions were laid in 1324, and from which ſome places, diſtinguiſhed for their loyalty to the Emperor, were not relieved for ſix and twenty years. Louis, indeed, deſired

his ſubjects to pay no regard to the bull of excommunication, and moſt of the laity, eſpecially of the larger towns, would gladly have obeyed him in ſpite of the Pope; but the greater part of the biſhops and clergy held with their ſpiritual head, and thus the inhabitants of Straſburg, Nuremberg, and other cities, where the civil authorities ſided with the Emperor, and the clergy with the Pope, were left year after year without any religious privileges; for public worſhip ceaſed, and all the buſineſs of life went on without the benedictions of the Church, no rite being allowed but baptiſm and extreme unction.

After this had laſted ſixteen years, the Emperor, wiſhing to relieve the anguiſhed conſciences of his people, iſſued, in conjunction with the Princes of the Empire, a great manifeſto to all Chriſten-

dom, refuting the Pope's accuſations againſt him, maintaining that he who had been legally choſen by the Electors was, in virtue thereof, the rightful Emperor, and had received his dignity from God, and proclaiming that all who denied this were guilty of high treaſon; that therefore none ſhould be allowed any longer to obſerve the Interdict, and all who ſhould continue to do ſo, whether communities or individuals, ſhould be deprived of every civil and eccleſiaſtical right and privilege. This courageous edict found a reſponſe in the heart of the nation, and public opinion continually declared itſelf more ſtrongly on the ſide of the Emperor. Yet on the whole it rather increaſed the general anarchy; for in many places the prieſts and monks were ſtedfaſt in their allegiance to the Pope, and, refuſing to

adminiſter public ſervice, were altogether baniſhed from the towns, and the churches and convents cloſed. In Straſburg, for inſtance, where the regular clergy had long ſince ceaſed to perform religious rites, the Dominicans and Franciſcans had continued to preach and perform maſs; but now, they too, frightened by the Edict, which placed them in direct oppoſition to the Pope, dared no longer to diſregard the renewed ſentence of excommunication hanging over them, and refuſing to read maſs, were expelled by the Town Council. Many of theſe baniſhed clergy wandered about in great diſtreſs, with difficulty finding refuge among the ſcattered rural population, and the ſufferings they endured proved the ſincerity of their conſcientious ſcruples. Some few, either from worldly motives, or out of pity for the

people, remained at their poſts. The former indeed throve by the miſeries of their fellow-creatures, driving a uſurious trade in the famine of ſpiritual conſolation; for it is upon record, that in time of peſtilence, the price of ſhrift has been as much as ſixty florins!

The ſpectacle of ſuch diſcord between the clergy and the laity, was ſomething unſpeakably ſhocking to the Chriſtian world in that age, and the energetic proceedings of the magiſtracy muſt have utterly ſtaggered the faith of many. Of all the events that were ſtirring up men's paſſions and energies, none was more calculated to move their ſouls to the very centre, than to find themſelves compelled to ſtand up in arms againſt thoſe whom they had been wont to bow down before, and to reverence as the ſource of thoſe ſpiritual bleſſings, for the ſake of which they

were now driven in desperation to take this awful step.

To these political and religious dissensions were added, in process of time, other miseries. After it had been preceded by earthquakes, hurricanes and famine, the Black Death broke out, spreading terror and desolation through Southern Europe. Men saw in these frightful calamities the judgments of God, but looked in vain for any to show them a way of deliverance and escape. Some believed that the last day was approaching; some, remembering an old prophecy, looked with hope for the return of the Great Emperor Frederick II. to restore justice and peace in the world, to punish the wicked clergy, and help the poor and oppressed flock to their rights. Others traversed the country in processions, scourging themselves and praying with

a loud voice, in order to atone for their ſins and appeaſe God's anger, and inveighing againſt man's unbelief, which had called down God's wrath upon the earth; while ſome thought to do God ſervice, by wreaking vengeance on the people which had ſlain the Lord, and thouſands of wretched Jews periſhed in the flames kindled by frantic terror. "All things worked together to deepen the ſenſe of the corruptneſs of the Church, to lead men's thoughts onwards from their phyſical to their ſpiritual wants, to awaken reflection on the judgments of God, and to fix their eyes on the indications of the future,"* ſo that John of Winterthur was probably not alone, in applying to his own times, what St. Paul ſays of the perils of the latter days.

* Neander, *Kirchengeſchichte*. B. 6, S. 728.

In theſe chaotic times, and in the countries where the ſtorms raged moſt fiercely, there were ſome who ſought that peace which could not be found on earth, in intercourſe with a higher world. Deſtitute of help and comfort and guidance from man, they took refuge in God, and finding that to them He had proved "a preſent help in time of trouble," "as the ſhadow of a great rock in a weary land," they tried to bring their fellow-men to believe and partake in a life raiſed above the troubles of this world. They deſired to ſhow them that that Eternal life and enduring peace, which Chriſt had promiſed to His diſciples, was, of a truth, to be found by the Way which He had pointed out,—by a living union with Him and the Father who had ſent Him.

With this aim, like-minded men and

women joined themſelves together, that by communion of heart and mutual counſel they might ſtrengthen each other in their common efforts to revive the ſpiritual life of thoſe around them. The Aſſociation they founded was kept ſecret, leſt through miſconception of their principles, they might fall under ſuſpicion of hereſy, and the Inquiſition ſhould put a ſtop to their labours; but they deſired to keep themſelves aloof from every thing that ſavoured of hereſy or diſorder. On the contrary, they carefully obſerved all the precepts of the Church, and carried their obedience ſo far that many of their number were among the prieſts, who were baniſhed for obeying the Pope, when the Emperor ordered them to diſregard the Interdict. They aſſumed the appellation of "Friends of God," (*Gottesfreunde*)

and, in the courſe of a few years, their aſſociations extended along the Rhine provinces from Baſle to Cologne, and eaſtwards through Swabia, Bavaria, and Franconia. Straſburg, Conſtance, Nuremberg and Nordlingen were among their chief ſeats. Their diſtinguiſhing doctrines were ſelf-renunciation,—the complete giving up of ſelf-will to the will of God ;—the continuous activity of the Spirit of God in all believers, and the intimate union poſſible between God and man ;—the worthleſſneſs of all religion baſed upon fear or the hope of reward ;—and the eſſential equality of the laity and clergy, though for the ſake of order and diſcipline, the organization of the Church was neceſſary. They often appealed to the declaration of Chriſt (John xv. 15), " Henceforth I call you not ſervants ; for the ſervant

knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you;" and from this they probably derived their name of "Friends of God." Their mode of action was ſimply perſonal, for they made no attempt to gain political and hierarchical power, but exerted all their influence by means of preaching, writing and ſocial intercourſe. The Aſſociation counted among its members prieſts, monks, and laity, without diſtinction of rank or ſex. Its leaders ſtood likewiſe in cloſe connection with ſeveral convents, eſpecially thoſe of Engenthal and Maria-Medingen near Nuremberg, preſided over by the ſiſters Chriſtina and Margaret Ebner, much of whoſe correſpondence is ſtill extant. Agnes, the widow of King Andrew of

Hungary, and various knights and burghers are alſo named as belonging to it.

Foremoſt among the leaders of this party ſhould be mentioned the celebrated Tauler, a Dominican monk of Straſburg, who ſpent his life in preaching and teaching up and down the country from Straſburg to Cologne, and whoſe influence is to this day active among his countrymen by means of his admirable ſermons, which are ſtill widely read. At the time of the Interdict, he wrote a noble appeal to the clergy not to forſake their flocks, maintaining that if the Emperor had ſinned, the blame lay with him only, not with his wretched ſubjects, ſo that it was a crying ſhame to viſit his guilt upon the innocent people, but that their unjuſt oppreſſion would be recompenſed to them by God hereafter. He acted up to his own

principles, and when the Black Death was raging in Straſburg, where it carried off 16,000 victims, he was unwearied in his efforts to adminiſter aid and conſolation to the ſick and dying.

Much of Tauler's religious fervour and light he himſelf attributed to the inſtructions of a layman, his friend. It is now known from contemporary records that this was Nicholas of Baſle, a citizen of that Free town and a ſecret Waldenſian. Little is known of his life beyond the fact that he was intimately connected with many of the heads of this party, and was reſorted to by them for guidance and help; for, being under ſuſpicion of hereſy, he had to conceal all his movements from the Inquiſition. He ſucceeded, however, in carrying on his labours and eluding his enemies, until he reached an ad-

vanced age; but at length, venturing alone and unprotected into France, he was taken, and burnt at Vienne in 1382. Another friend of Tauler's, and like him an eloquent and powerful preacher, whose sermons are still read with delight, was Henry Suso, a Dominican monk, belonging to a knightly family in Swabia.

One of the leaders of the "Friends of God," Nicholas of Strasburg, was in 1326 appointed by John XXII. nuncio, with the oversight of the Dominican order throughout Germany, and dedicated to that Pope an Essay of great learning and ability, refuting the prevalent interpretations of Scripture, which referred the coming of Antichrist and the Judgment day to the immediate future. Thus we see that the "Friends of God" were not confined

to one political party, and this likewiſe appears from the hiſtory of another celebrated member of this ſect, Henry of Nordlingen, a prieſt of Conſtance, who, like Suſo, was baniſhed for his adherence to the Pope. One of the moſt remarkable men of this ſect was a layman and married, Rulman Merſwin, belonging to a high family at Straſburg. He appears to have been led to a religious life by the influence of Tauler, who was his confeſſor. He is the author of ſeveral myſtical works which, he ſays, he wrote "to do good to his fellow creatures," but he contributed perhaps ſtill more largely to their benefit by his activity in charitable works, for he eſtabliſhed one hoſpital and ſeems to have had the overſight of others alſo. He likewiſe gave largely to churches and convents, but is beſt known by hav-

ing founded a houſe for the Knights of St. John in Straſburg. The characteriſtic doctrines of the Friends of God have already been indicated. That they ſhould not have fallen into ſome exaggerations was ſcarcely poſſible, but where they have done ſo, it may generally be traced to the influence of the monaſtic life to which moſt of them were dedicated, and to the perplexities of their age.

The book before us was probably written ſomewhere about 1350, ſince it refers to Tauler as already well known. It was the practice of the "Friends of God," to conceal their names as much as poſſible when they wrote, leſt a deſire for fame ſhould mingle with their endeavours to be uſeful. This is probably the reaſon why we have no indication of its authorſhip

beyond a preface, which the Wurtzburg Manuſcript poſſeſſes in common with that which was in Luther's hands, and from which it appears that the writer "was of the Teutonic order, a prieſt and a warden in the houſe of the Teutonic order in Frankfort." A tranſlation of this Preface is prefixed to the preſent volume. Till the diſcovery of the Wurtzburg Manuſcript, it was ſuppoſed that this Preface was from Luther's hand, who merely embodied in it the tradition which he had received from ſome ſource unknown to us; and hence, ſome, diſregarding its authority, have aſcribed the Theologia Germanica to Tauler, whoſe ſtyle it reſembles ſo much that it might be taken for his work, but for the reference to him already mentioned. Since however the antiquity of the Preface is now proved, we muſt be con-

tent with the information which it affords us, unleſs any further diſcoveries among old manuſcripts ſhould throw freſh light upon the ſubject.

Should this attempt to introduce the writings of the "Friends of God" in England, awaken an intereſt in them and their works, the Tranſlator propoſes to follow up the preſent volume with an account of Tauler and ſelections from his writings; believing that the ſtudy of theſe German theologians, who were already called old in Luther's age, would furniſh the beſt antidote to what of miſchief Engliſh readers may have derived from German theology, falſely ſo called.

Mancheſter, *February*, 1854.

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Mancheſter, *February*, 1854.

LETTER
FROM CHEVALIER BUNSEN TO THE TRANSLATOR.

77 Marina, St. Leonard's-on-Sea,
11th May, 1854.

My dear Friend,

OUR Letter and the proof ſheets of your Tranſlation of the Theologia Germanica, with Kingſley's Preface and your Introduction, were delivered to me yeſterday, as I was leaving Carlton Terrace to breathe once more, for a few days, the refreſhing air of this quiet, lovely place. You told me, at the time, that

you had been led to ſtudy Tauler and the Theologia Germanica by ſome converſations which we had on their ſubjects in 1851, and you now wiſh me to ſtate to your readers, in a few lines, what place I conceive this ſchool of Germanic theology to hold in the general development of chriſtian thought, and what appears to me to be the bearing of this work in particular upon the preſent dangers and proſpects of Chriſtianity, as well as upon the eternal intereſts of religion in the heart of every man and woman.

In complying willingly with your requeſt, I may begin by ſaying that, with Luther, I rank this ſhort treatiſe next to the Bible, but unlike him, ſhould place it before rather than after St. Auguſtine. That ſchool of pious, learned, and profound men of which

this book is, as it were, the popular catechiſm, was the Germanic counterpart of Romanic ſcholaſticiſm, and more than the revival of that Latin theology which produced ſo many eminent thinkers, from Auguſtine, its father, to Thomas Aquinas, its laſt great genius, whoſe death did not take place until after the birth of Dante, who again was the contemporary of the Socrates of the Rheniſh ſchool,—Meiſter Eckart, the Dominican.

The theology of this ſchool was the firſt proteſt of the Germanic mind againſt the Judaiſm and formaliſm of the Byzantine and medieval Churches, —the hollowneſs of ſcience to which ſcholaſticiſm had led, and the rottenneſs of ſociety which a pompous hierarchy ſtrove in vain to conceal, but had not the power nor the will to cor-

rect. Eckart and Tauler, his pupil, brought religion home from fruitleſs ſpeculation, and reaſonings upon imaginary or impoſſible ſuppoſitions, to man's own heart and to the underſtanding of the common people, as Socrates did the Greek philoſophy. There is both a remarkable analogy and a ſtriking contraſt between the great Athenian and thoſe Dominican friars. Socrates did full juſtice to the deep ethical ideas embodied in the eſtabliſhed religion of his country and its venerated myſteries, which he far preferred to the ſhallow philoſophy of the ſophiſts; but he diſſuaded his pupils from ſeeking an initiation into the myſteries, or at leaſt from reſting their convictions and hopes upon them, exhorting them to rely, not upon the oracles of Delphi, but upon the oracle in their own boſom.

The "Friends of God," on the other hand, believing (like Dante) moſt profoundly in the truth of the Chriſtian religion, on which the eſtabliſhed church of their age, notwithſtanding its corruptions, was eſſentially founded, recommended ſubmiſſion to the ordinances of the church as a wholeſome preparatory diſcipline for many minds. Like the ſaint of Athens, however, they ſpoke plain truth to the people. To their diſciples, and thoſe who came to them for inſtruction, they exhibited the whole depth of that real chriſtian philoſophy, which opens to the mind after all ſcholaſtic conventionaliſm has been thrown away, and the ſoul liſtens to the reſponſe which Chriſt's Goſpel and God's creation find in a ſincere heart and a ſelf-ſacrificing life;—a philoſophy which, conſidered merely as a ſpecula-

tion, is far more profound than any ſcholaſtic ſyſtem. But, in a ſtyle that was intelligible to all, they preached that no fulfilment of rites and ceremonies, nor of ſo-called religious duties,—in fact, no outward works, however meritorious, can either give peace to man's conſcience, nor yet give him ſtrength to bear up againſt the temptations of proſperity and the trials of adverſity.

In following this courſe they brought the people back from hollow profeſſion and real deſpair, to the bleſſings of goſpel religion, while they opened to philoſophic minds a new career of thought. By teaching that man is juſtified by faith, and by faith alone, they prepared the popular intellectual element of the Reformation; by teaching that this faith has its philoſophy, as fully able to

carry conviction to the underſtanding, as faith is to give peace to the troubled conſcience, they paved the way for that ſpiritual philoſophy of the mind, of which Kant laid the foundation. But they were not controverſialiſts, as the Reformers of the ſixteenth century were driven to be by their poſition, and not men of ſcience excluſively, as the maſters of modern philoſophy in Germany were and are. Although moſt of them friars, or laymen connected with the religious orders of the time, they were men of the people and men of action. They preached the ſaving faith to the people in churches, in hoſpitals, in the ſtreets and public places. In the ſtrength of this faith, Tauler, when he had been already for years the univerſal object of admiration as a theologian and preacher through all the free cities on the Rhine,

from Baſle to Cologne, humbled himſelf, and remained ſilent for the ſpace of two years, after the myſterious layman had ſhown him the inſufficiency of his ſcholaſtic learning and preaching. In the ſtrength of this faith, he braved the Pope's Interdict, and gave the conſolations of religion to the people of Straſburg, during the dreadful plague which depopulated that flouriſhing city. For this faith, Eckart ſuffered with patience ſlander and perſecution, as formerly he had borne with meekneſs, honours and praiſe. For this faith, Nicolaus of Baſle, who ſat down as a humble ſtranger at Tauler's feet to become the inſtrument of his real enlightenment, died a martyr in the flames. In this ſenſe, the "Friends of God" were, like the Apoſtles, men of the people and practical Chriſtians, while as men of thought,

their ideas contributed powerfully to the great efforts of the European nations in the ſixteenth century.

Let me, therefore, my dear friend, lay aſide all philoſophical and theological terms, and ſtate the principle of the golden book which you are juſt preſenting to the Engliſh public, in what I conſider, with Luther, the beſt Theological exponent, in plain Teutonic, thus:—

Sin is ſelfiſhneſs:
Godlineſs is unſelfiſhneſs:
A godly life is the ſtedfaſt working out of inward freeneſs from ſelf:
To become thus godlike is the bringing back of man's firſt nature.

On this laſt point,—man's divine dignity and deſtiny,—Tauler ſpeaks as

ſtrongly as our author, and almoſt as ſtrongly as the Bible. Man is indeed to him God's own image. "As a ſculptor," he ſays ſomewhere, with a ſtriking range of mind for a monk of the fourteenth century, "is ſaid to have exclaimed indignantly on ſeeing a rude block of marble, 'what a godlike beauty thou hideſt!' thus God looks upon man in whom God's own image is hidden." "We may begin," he ſays in a kindred paſſage, "by loving God in hope of reward, we may expreſs ourſelves concerning Him in ſymbols (*Bilder*) but we muſt throw them all away, and much more we muſt ſcorn all idea of reward, that we may love God only becauſe He is the Supreme Good, and contemplate His eternal nature as the real ſubſtance of our own ſoul."

But let no one imagine that theſe

men, although doomed to paſſiveneſs in many reſpects, thought a contemplative or monkiſh life a condition of ſpiritual Chriſtianity, and not rather a danger to it. "If a man truly loves God," ſays Tauler, "and has no will but to do God's will, the whole force of the river Rhine may run at him and will not diſturb him or break his peace; if we find outward things a danger and diſturbance, it comes from our appropriating to ourſelves what is God's." But Tauler, as well as our Author, uſes the ſtrongeſt language to expreſs his horror of Sin, man's own creation, and their view on this ſubject forms their great contraſt to the philoſophers of the Spinoziſtic ſchool. Among the Reformers, Luther ſtands neareſt to them, with reſpect to the great fundamental points of theologi-

cal teaching, but their intenſe dread of Sin as a rebellion againſt God, is ſhared both by Luther and Calvin. Among later theologians, Julius Müller, in his profound Eſſay on Sin, and Richard Rothe, in his great work on Chriſtian Ethics, come neareſt to them in depth of thought and ethical earneſtneſs, and the firſt of theſe eminent writers carries out, as it appears to me, moſt conſiſtently that fundamental truth of the Theologia Germanica that there is no ſin but Selfiſhneſs, and that all Selfiſhneſs is ſin.

Such appear to me to be the characteriſtics of our book and of Tauler. I may be allowed to add, that this ſmall but golden Treatiſe has been now for almoſt forty years, an unſpeakable comfort to me and to many Chriſtian friends (moſt of whom have already departed

in peace), to whom I had the happineſs of introducing it. May it in your admirably faithful and lucid tranſlation become a real "book for the million" in England, a privilege which it already ſhares in Germany with Tauler's matchleſs Sermons, of which I rejoice to hear that you are making a ſelection for publication. May it become a bleſſing to many a longing Chriſtian heart in that dear country of yours, which I am on the point of leaving, after many happy years of reſidence, but on which I can never look as a ſtrange land to me, any more than I ſhall ever conſider myſelf as a ſtranger in that home of old Teutonic liberty and energy, which I have found to be alſo the home of practical Chriſtianity and of warm and faithful affection.

BUNSEN.

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ERRATA.

Page 138, line 9 from bottom, *for* "Him" *read* "him."
168, line 6 from bottom, *for* "in One as All, One and All," *read* "in One as One and All."
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A Preface.

This little Book hath the Almighty and Eternal God spoken by the mouth of a wise, understanding, faithful, righteous man, His friend, who aforetime was of the Teutonic order, a Priest and a Warden in the house of the Teutonic order in Frankfort: and it giveth much precious insight into divine truth, and especially teacheth how and whereby we may discern the true and upright Friends of God from those unrighteous and false free-thinkers, who are most hurtful to the Holy Church.

Theologia Germanica.

CHAPTER I.

Of that which is perfect and that which is in part, and how that which is in part is done away, when that which is perfect is come.

ST. PAUL saith, "When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away."* Now mark what is "that which is perfect," and "that which is in part."

"That which is perfect" is a Being, who hath comprehended and included all things in Himself and His own Substance, and without whom, and beside

* 1 Cor. xiii. 10.

whom, there is no true Subſtance, and in whom all things have their Subſtance. For He is the Subſtance of all things, and is in Himſelf unchangeable and immoveable, and changeth and moveth all things elſe. But "that which is in part," or the Imperfect, is that which hath its ſource in, or ſpringeth from the Perfect; juſt as a brightneſs or a viſible appearance floweth out from the ſun or a candle, and appeareth to be ſomewhat, this or that. And it is called a creature; and of all theſe "things which are in part," none is the Perfect. So alſo the Perfect is none of the things which are in part. The things which are in part can be apprehended, known, and expreſſed; but the Perfect cannot be apprehended, known, or expreſſed by any creature as creature. Therefore we do not give a name to the Perfect, for it is none of theſe. The creature as creature cannot know nor apprehend it, name nor conceive it.

" Now when that which is Perfect is come, then that which is in part ſhall be done away." But when doth it come? I ſay, when as much as may be, it is known, felt and taſted of the ſoul. [For the lack lieth altogether in us, and not in it. In like manner the ſun lighteth the whole world, and is as near to one as another, yet a blind man ſeeth it not; but the fault thereof lieth in the blind man, not in the ſun. And like as the ſun may not hide its brightneſs, but muſt give light unto the earth (for heaven indeed draweth its light and heat from another fountain), ſo alſo God, who is the higheſt Good, willeth not to hide Himſelf from any, whereſoever He findeth a devout ſoul, that is thoroughly purified from all creatures. For in what meaſure we put off the creature, in the ſame meaſure are we able to put on the Creator; neither more nor leſs. For if mine eye is to ſee anything, it muſt be ſingle, or

elſe be purified from all other things; and where heat and light enter in, cold and darkneſs muſt needs depart; it cannot be otherwiſe.]

But one might ſay, "Now ſince the Perfect cannot be known nor apprehended of any creature, but the ſoul is a creature, how can it be known by the ſoul?" Anſwer: This is why we ſay, "by the ſoul *as a creature*." We mean it is impoſſible to the creature in virtue of its creature-nature and qualities, that by which it ſaith "I" and "myſelf." For in whatſoever creature the Perfect ſhall be known, therein creature-nature, qualities, the I, the Self and the like, muſt all be loſt and done away. This is the meaning of that ſaying of St. Paul: "When that which is perfect is come," (that is, when it is known,) "then that which is in part" (to wit, creature-nature, qualities, the I, the Self, the Mine) will be deſpiſed and counted for nought. So long as we think much

of theſe things, cleave to them with love, joy, pleaſure or deſire, ſo long remaineth the Perfect unknown to us.

But it might further be ſaid, "Thou ſayeſt, beſide the Perfect there is no Subſtance, yet ſayeſt again that ſomewhat floweth out from it: now is not that which hath flowed out from it, ſomething beſide it?" Anſwer: This is why we ſay, beſide it, or without it, there is no *true* Subſtance. That which hath flowed forth from it, is no true Subſtance, and hath no Subſtance except in the Perfect, but is an accident, or a brightneſs, or a viſible appearance, which is no Subſtance, and hath no Subſtance except in the fire whence the brightneſs flowed forth, ſuch as the ſun or a candle.

CHAP. II.

Of what Sin is, and how we muſt not take unto ourſelves any good Thing, ſeeing that it belongeth unto the true Good alone.

HE Scripture and the Faith and the Truth ſay, Sin is nought elſe, but that the creature turneth away from the unchangeable Good and betaketh itſelf to the changeable; that is to ſay, that it turneth away from the Perfect, to "that which is in part" and imperfect, and moſt often to itſelf. Now mark: when the creature claimeth for its own anything good, ſuch as Subſtance, Life, Knowledge, Power, and in ſhort whatever we ſhould call good, as if it were that, or poſſeſſed that, or that were itſelf, or that proceeded from it,—as often as this cometh to paſs, the creature goeth aſtray. What did the devil do elſe, or what

was his going aſtray and his fall elſe, but that he claimed for himſelf to be alſo ſomewhat, and would have it that ſomewhat was his, and ſomewhat was due to him? This ſetting up of a claim and his I and Me and Mine, theſe were his going aſtray, and his fall. And thus it is to this day.

CHAP. III.

How Man's Fall and going aſtray muſt be amended as Adam's Fall was.

WHAT elſe did Adam do but this ſame thing? It is ſaid, it was becauſe Adam ate the apple that he was loſt, or fell. I ſay, it was becauſe of his claiming ſomething for his own, and becauſe of his I, Mine, Me, and the like. Had he eaten ſeven apples, and yet never claimed anything for his own, he would not have fallen: but as ſoon as he called ſomething

his own, he fell, and would have fallen if he had never touched an apple. Behold! I have fallen a hundred times more often and deeply, and gone a hundred times farther aſtray than Adam; and not all mankind could amend his fall, or bring him back from going aſtray. But how ſhall my fall be amended? It muſt be healed as Adam's fall was healed, and on the ſelf-ſame wiſe. By whom, and on what wiſe was that healing brought to paſs? Mark this: man could not without God, and God ſhould not without man. Wherefore God took human nature or manhood upon himſelf and was made man, and man was made divine. Thus the healing was brought to paſs. So alſo muſt my fall be healed. I cannot do the work without God, and God may not or will not without me; for if it ſhall be accompliſhed, in me, too, God muſt be made man; in ſuch ſort that God muſt take to himſelf all that is in me,

within and without, ſo that there may be nothing in me which ſtriveth againſt God or hindereth his work. Now if God took to himſelf all men that are in the world, or ever were, and were made man in them, and they were made divine in him, and this work were not fulfilled in me, my fall and my wandering would never be amended except it were fulfilled in me alſo. And in this bringing back and healing, I can, or may, or ſhall do nothing of myſelf, but juſt ſimply yield to God, ſo that He alone may do all things in me and work, and I may ſuffer him and all his work and his divine will. And becauſe I will not do ſo, but I count myſelf to be my own, and ſay "I," "mine," "me" and the like, God is hindered, ſo that he cannot do his work in me alone and without hindrance; for this cauſe my fall and my going aſtray remain unhealed. Behold! this all cometh of my claiming ſomewhat for my own.

CHAP. IV.

How Man, when he claimeth any good Thing for his own, falleth, and toucheth God in his Honour.

GOD ſaith, "I will not give my glory to another."* This is as much as to ſay, that praiſe and honour and glory belong to none but to God only. But now, if I call any good thing my own, as if I were it, or of myſelf had power or did or knew anything, or as if anything were mine or of me, or belonged to me, or were due to me or the like, I take unto myſelf ſomewhat of honour and glory, and do two evil things: Firſt, I fall and go aſtray as aforeſaid: Secondly, I touch God in his honour and take unto myſelf what belongeth to God

* Iſaiah xlii. 8.

only. For all that must be called good belongeth to none but to the true eternal Goodness which is God only, and whoso taketh it unto himself, committeth unrighteousness and is against God.

CHAP. V.

How we are to take that Saying, that we must come to be without Will, Wisdom, Love, Desire, Knowledge, and the like.

ERTAIN men say that we ought to be without will, wisdom, love, desire, knowledge, and the like. Hereby is not to be understood that there is to be no knowledge in man, and that God is not to be loved by him, nor desired and longed for, nor praised and honoured; for that were a great loss, and man were like the beasts [and as the brutes that have no reason.] But it meaneth that man's knowledge

ſhould be ſo clear and perfect that he ſhould acknowledge of a truth [that in himſelf he neither hath nor can do any good thing, and that none of his knowledge, wiſdom and art, his will, love and good works do come from himſelf, nor are of man, nor of any creature, but] that all theſe are of the eternal God, from whom they all proceed. [As Chriſt himſelf ſaith, "Without me, ye can do nothing."* St. Paul ſaith alſo, "What haſt thou that thou haſt not received?"† As much as to ſay—nothing. "Now if thou didſt receive it, why doſt thou glory as if thou hadſt not received it?" Again he ſaith, "Not that we are ſufficient of ourſelves to think anything as of ourſelves, but our ſufficiency is of God."‡] Now when a man duly perceiveth theſe things in himſelf, he and the creature fall behind, and he doth not call any thing his own, and the leſs he taketh

* John xv. 5. † 1 Cor. iv. 7. ‡ 2 Cor. iii. 5.

this knowledge unto himſelf, the more perfect doth it become. So alſo is it with the will, and love and deſire, and the like. For the leſs we call theſe things our own, the more perfect and noble and godlike do they become, and the more we think them our own, the baſer and leſs pure and perfect do they become.

Behold on this ſort muſt we caſt all things from us, and ſtrip ourſelves of them; we muſt refrain from claiming anything for our own. When we do this, we ſhall have the beſt, fulleſt, cleareſt and nobleſt knowledge that a man can have, and alſo the nobleſt and pureſt love, will and deſire; for then theſe will be all of God alone. It is much better that they ſhould be God's than the creature's. Now that I aſcribe anything good to myſelf, as if I were, or had done, or knew, or could perform any good thing, or that it were mine, this is all of ſin and folly. For if the

truth were rightly known by me, I ſhould alſo know that I am not that good thing and that it is not mine, nor of me, and that I do not know it, and cannot do it, and the like. If this came to paſs, I ſhould needs ceaſe to call anything my own.

It is better that God, or his works, ſhould be known, as far as it be poſſible to us, and loved, praiſed and honoured, and the like, and even that man ſhould but vainly imagine he loveth or praiſeth God, than that God ſhould be altogether unpraiſed, unloved, unhonoured and unknown. For when the vain imagination and ignorance are turned into an underſtanding and knowledge of the truth, the claiming anything for our own will ceaſe of itſelf. Then the man ſays: Behold! I, poor fool that I was, imagined it was I, but behold! it is, and was, of a truth, God!"

CHAP. VI.

How that which is beſt and nobleſt ſhould alſo be loved above all Things by us, merely becauſe it is the beſt.

MASTER called Boetius ſaith, "It is of ſin that we do not love that which is Beſt." He hath ſpoken the truth. That which is beſt ſhould be the deareſt of all things to us; and in our love of it, neither helpfulneſs nor unhelpfulneſs, advantage nor injury, gain nor loſs, honour nor diſhonour, praiſe nor blame, nor anything of the kind ſhould be regarded; but what is in truth the nobleſt and beſt of all things, ſhould be alſo the deareſt of all things, and that for no other cauſe than that it is the nobleſt and beſt.

Hereby may a man order his life

within and without. His outward life: for among the creatures one is better than another, according as the Eternal Good manifeſteth itſelf and worketh more in one than in another. Now that creature in which the Eternal Good moſt manifeſteth itſelf, ſhineth forth, worketh, is moſt known and loved, is the beſt, and that wherein the Eternal Good is leaſt manifeſted is the leaſt good of all creatures. Therefore when we have to do with the creatures and hold converſe with them, and take note of their diverſe qualities, the beſt creatures muſt always be the deareſt to us, and we muſt cleave to them, and unite ourſelves to them, above all to thoſe which we attribute to God as belonging to him or divine, ſuch as wiſdom, truth, kindneſs, peace, love, juſtice, and the like. Hereby ſhall we order our outward man, and all that is contrary to theſe virtues we muſt eſchew and flee from.

But if our inward man were to make a leap and ſpring into the Perfect, we ſhould find and taſte how that the Perfect is without meaſure, number or end, better and nobler than all which is imperfect and in part, and the Eternal above the temporal or periſhable, and the fountain and ſource above all that floweth or can ever flow from it. Thus that which is imperfect and in part would become taſteleſs and be as nothing to us. Be aſſured of this: All that we have ſaid muſt come to paſs if we are to love that which is nobleſt, higheſt and beſt.

CHAP. VII.

Of the Eyes of the Spirit wherewith Man looketh into Eternity and into Time, and how the one is hindered of the other in its Working.

ET us remember how it is written and ſaid that the ſoul of Chriſt had two eyes, a right and a left eye. In the beginning, when the ſoul of Chriſt was created, ſhe fixed her right eye upon eternity and the Godhead, and remained in the full intuition and enjoyment of the Divine Eſſence and Eternal Perfection; and continued thus unmoved and undiſturbed by all the accidents and travail, ſuffering, torment and pain that ever befell the outward man. But with the left eye ſhe beheld the creature and perceived all things therein, and took note of the difference between the

creatures, which were better or worſe, nobler or meaner; and thereafter was the outward man of Chriſt ordered.

Thus the inner man of Chriſt, according to the right eye of his ſoul, ſtood in the full exerciſe of his divine nature, in perfect bleſſedneſs, joy and eternal peace. But the outward man and the left eye of Chriſt's ſoul, ſtood with him in perfect ſuffering, in all tribulation, affliction and travail; and this in ſuch ſort that the inward and right eye remained unmoved, unhindered and untouched by all the travail, ſuffering, grief and anguiſh that ever befell the outward man. It hath been ſaid that when Chriſt was bound to the pillar and ſcourged, and when he hung upon the croſs, according to the outward man, yet his inner man, or ſoul according to the right eye, ſtood in as full poſſeſſion of divine joy and bleſſedneſs as it did after his aſcenſion, or as it doth now. In like manner his out-

ward man, or ſoul with the left eye, was never hindered, diſturbed or troubled by the inward eye in its contemplation of the outward things that belonged to it.

Now the created ſoul of man hath alſo two eyes. The one is the power of ſeeing into eternity, the other of ſeeing into time and the creatures, of perceiving how they differ from each other as aforeſaid, of giving life and needful things to the body, and ordering and governing it for the beſt. But theſe two eyes of the ſoul of man cannot both perform their work at once; but if the ſoul ſhall ſee with the right eye into eternity, then the left eye muſt cloſe itſelf and refrain from working, and be as though it were dead. For if the left eye be fulfilling its office toward outward things; that is, holding converſe with time and the creatures; then muſt the right eye be hindered in its working; that is, in its contemplation.

Therefore whoſoever will have the one muſt let the other go; for "no man can ſerve two maſters."

CHAP. VIII.

How the Soul of Man, while it is yet in the Body, may obtain a Foretaſte of eternal Bleſſedneſs.

IT hath been aſked whether it be poſſible for the ſoul, while it is yet in the body, to reach ſo high as to caſt a glance into eternity, and receive a foretaſte of eternal life and eternal bleſſedneſs. This is commonly denied; and truly ſo in a ſenſe. For it indeed cannot be ſo long as the ſoul is taking heed to the body, and the things which miniſter and appertain thereto, and to time and the creature, and is diſturbed and troubled and diſtracted thereby. For if the ſoul ſhall riſe to ſuch a ſtate, ſhe muſt be quite

pure, wholly ſtripped and bare of all images, and be entirely ſeparate from all creatures, and above all from herſelf. Now many think this is not to be done and is impoſſible in this preſent time. But St. Dionyſius maintains that it is poſſible, as we find from his words in his Epiſtle to Timothy, where he ſaith: "For the beholding of the hidden things of God, ſhalt thou forſake ſenſe and the things of the fleſh, and all that the ſenſes can apprehend, and that reaſon of her own powers can bring forth, and all things created and uncreated that reaſon is able to comprehend and know, and ſhalt take thy ſtand upon an utter abandonment of thyſelf, and as knowing none of the aforeſaid things, and enter into union with Him who is, and who is above all exiſtence and all knowledge." Now if he did not hold this to be poſſible in this preſent time, why ſhould he teach it and enjoin it on us in this preſent time? But it be-

hoveth you to know that a maſter hath ſaid on this paſſage of St. Dionyſius, that it is poſſible, and may happen to a man often, till he become ſo accuſtomed to it, as to be able to look into eternity whenever he will. [For when a thing is at firſt very hard to a man and ſtrange, and ſeemingly quite impoſſible, if he put all his ſtrength and energy into it, and perſevere therein, that will afterward grow quite light and eaſy, which he at firſt thought quite out of reach, ſeeing that it is of no uſe to begin any work, unleſs it may be brought to a good end.]

And a ſingle one of theſe excellent glances is better, worthier, higher and more pleaſing to God, than all that the creature can perform as a creature. [And as ſoon as a man turneth himſelf in ſpirit, and with his whole heart and mind entereth into the mind of God which is above time, all that ever he hath loſt is reſtored in a moment.

And if a man were to do thus a thouſand times in a day, each time a freſh and real union would take place; and in this ſweet and divine work ſtandeth the trueſt and fulleſt union that may be in this preſent time. For he who hath attained thereto, aſketh nothing further, for he hath found the Kingdom of Heaven and Eternal Life on earth.]

CHAP. IX.

How it is better and more profitable for a Man that he ſhould perceive what God will do with him, or to what end He will make Uſe of him, than if he knew all that God had ever wrought, or would ever work through all the Creatures; and how Bleſſedneſs lieth alone in God, and not in the Creatures, or in any Works.

E ſhould mark and know of a very truth that all manner of virtue and goodneſs, and even that Eternal Good which is God Him-

ſelf, can never make a man virtuous, good, or happy, ſo long as it is outſide the ſoul; [that is, ſo long as the man is holding converſe with outward things through his ſenſes and reaſon, and doth not withdraw into himſelf and learn to underſtand his own life, who and what he is.] The like is true of ſin and evil. [For all manner of ſin and wickedneſs can never make us evil, ſo long as it is outſide of us; that is, ſo long as we do not commit it, or do not give conſent to it.]

Therefore although it be good and profitable that we ſhould aſk, and learn and know, what good and holy men have wrought and ſuffered, and how God hath dealt with them, and what he hath wrought in and through them, yet it were a thouſand times better that we ſhould in ourſelves learn and perceive and underſtand, who we are, how and what our own life is, what God is and is doing in us, what he will have from

us, and to what ends he will or will not make uſe of us. [For, of a truth, thoroughly to know oneſelf, is above all art, for it is the higheſt art. If thou knoweſt thyſelf well, thou art better and more praiſeworthy before God, than if thou didſt not know thyſelf, but didſt underſtand the courſe of the heavens and of all the planets and ſtars, alſo the virtue of all herbs, and the ſtructure and diſpoſitions of all mankind, alſo the nature of all beaſts, and, in ſuch matters, hadſt all the ſkill of all who are in heaven and on earth. For it is ſaid, there came a voice from heaven, ſaying, "Man, know thyſelf."] Thus that proverb is ſtill true, "going out were never ſo good, but ſtaying at home were much better."

Further, ye ſhould learn that eternal bleſſedneſs lieth in one thing alone, and in nought elſe. And if ever man or the ſoul is to be made bleſſed, that one thing alone muſt be in the ſoul. Now

ſome might aſk, "But what is that one thing?" I anſwer, it is Goodneſs, or that which hath been made good, and yet neither this good nor that, which we can name, or perceive or ſhow; but it is all and above all good things.

Moreover, it needeth not to enter into the ſoul, for it is there already, only it is unperceived. When we ſay we ſhould come unto it, we mean that we ſhould ſeek it, feel it, and taſte it. And now ſince it is One, unity and ſingleneſs is better than manifoldneſs. For bleſſedneſs lieth not in much and many, but in One and oneneſs. In one word, bleſſedneſs lieth not in any creature, or work of the creatures, but it lieth alone in God and in his works. Therefore I muſt wait only on God and his work, and leave on one ſide all creatures with their works, and firſt of all myſelf. In like manner all the great works and wonders that God has ever

wrought or ſhall ever work in or through the creatures, or even God himſelf with all his goodneſs, ſo far as theſe things exiſt or are done outſide of me, can never make me bleſſed, but only in ſo far as they exiſt and are done and loved, known, taſted and felt within me.

CHAP. X.

How the perfect Men have no other Deſire than that they may be to the Eternal Goodneſs what his Hand is to a Man, and how they have loſt the Fear of Hell, and Hope of Heaven.

NOW let us mark: Where men are enlightened with the true light, they perceive that all which they might deſire or chooſe, is nothing to that which all creatures, as creatures, ever deſired or choſe or knew. Therefore they renounce all

desire and choice, and commit and commend themselves and all things to the Eternal Goodness. Nevertheless, there remaineth in them a desire to go forward and get nearer to the Eternal Goodness; that is, to come to a clearer knowledge, and warmer love, and more comfortable assurance, and perfect obedience and subjection; so that every enlightened man could say: "I would fain be to the Eternal Goodness, what his own hand is to a man." And he feareth always that he is not enough so, and longeth for the salvation of all men. And such men do not call this longing their own, nor take it unto themselves, for they know well that this desire is not of man, but of the Eternal Goodness; for whatsoever is good shall no one take unto himself as his own, seeing that it belongeth to the Eternal Goodness only.

Moreover, these men are in a state of freedom, because they have lost the

fear of pain or hell, and the hope of reward or heaven, but are living in pure ſubmiſſion to the Eternal Goodneſs, in the perfect freedom of fervent love. This mind was in Chriſt in perfection, and is alſo in his followers, in ſome more, and in ſome leſs. But it is a ſorrow and ſhame to think that the Eternal Goodneſs is ever moſt graciouſly guiding and drawing us, and we will not yield to it. What is better and nobler than true poorneſs in ſpirit? Yet when that is held up before us, we will have none of it, but are always ſeeking ourſelves, and our own things. [We like to have our mouths always filled with good things,] that we may have in ourſelves a lively taſte of pleaſure and ſweetneſs. When this is ſo, we are well pleaſed, and think it ſtandeth not amiſs with us. [But we are yet a long way off from a perfect life. For when God will draw us up to ſomething higher, that is, to an utter loſs and forſaking of our own

things, ſpiritual and natural, and withdraweth his comfort and ſweetneſs from us, we faint and are troubled, and can in no wiſe bring our minds to it; and we forget God and neglect holy exerciſes, and fancy we are loſt for ever.] This is a great error and a bad ſign. For a true lover of God, loveth him or the Eternal Goodneſs alike, in having, and in not having, in ſweetneſs and bitterneſs, in good or evil report, and the like, for he ſeeketh alone the honour of God, and not his own, either in ſpiritual or natural things. And therefore he ſtandeth alike unſhaken in all things, at all ſeaſons. [Hereby let every man prove himſelf, how he ſtandeth towards God, his Creator and Lord.]

CHAP. XI.

How a righteous Man in this preſent Time is brought into Hell, and there cannot be comforted, and how he is taken out of Hell and carried into Heaven, and there cannot be troubled.

HRIST'S ſoul muſt needs deſcend into hell, before it aſcended into heaven. So muſt alſo the ſoul of man. But mark ye in what manner this cometh to paſs. When a man truly perceiveth and conſidereth himſelf, who and what he is, and findeth himſelf utterly vile and wicked, and unworthy of all the comfort and kindneſs that he hath ever received from God, or from the creatures, he falleth into ſuch a deep abaſement and deſpiſing of himſelf, that he thinketh himſelf unworthy that the earth

ſhould bear him, and it ſeemeth to him reaſonable that all creatures in heaven and earth ſhould riſe up againſt him and avenge their Creator on him, and ſhould puniſh and torment him; and that he were unworthy even of that. And it ſeemeth to him that he ſhall be eternally loſt and damned, and a footſtool to all the devils in hell, and that this is right and juſt, [and all too little compared to his ſins which he ſo often and in ſo many ways hath committed againſt God his Creator.] And therefore alſo he will not and dare not deſire any conſolation or releaſe, either from God or from any creature that is in heaven or on earth; but he is willing to be unconſoled and unreleaſed, and he doth not grieve over his condemnation and ſufferings; for they are right and juſt, and not contrary to God, but according to the will of God. Therefore they are right in his eyes, and he hath nothing to ſay againſt them. Nothing

grieveth him but his own guilt and wickedneſs; for that is not right and is contrary to God, and for that cauſe he is grieved and troubled in ſpirit.

This is what is meant by true repentance for ſin. And he who in this preſent time entereth into this hell, entereth afterward into the Kingdom of Heaven, and obtaineth a foretaſte thereof which excelleth all the delight and joy which he ever hath had or could have in this preſent time from temporal things. But whilſt a man is thus in hell, none may conſole him, neither God nor the creature, as it is written "In hell there is no redemption."* Of this ſtate hath one ſaid, "Let me periſh, let me die! I live without hope; from within and from without I am condemned, let no one pray that I may be releaſed."

Now God hath not forſaken a man in this hell, but He is laying His

* The writer is probably alluding to Ps. xlix. 8.

hand upon him, that the man may not desire nor regard anything but the Eternal Good only, and may come to know that that is so noble and passing good, that none can search out or express its bliss, consolation and joy, peace, rest and satisfaction. And then, when the man neither careth for, nor seeketh, nor desireth, anything but the Eternal Good alone, and seeketh not himself, nor his own things, but the honour of God only, he is made a partaker of all manner of joy, bliss, peace, rest and consolation, and so the man is henceforth in the Kingdom of Heaven.

This hell and this heaven are two good, safe ways for a man in this present time, and happy is he who truly findeth them. For this hell passeth away, and the Kingdom of Heaven endureth.

Also let a man mark, when he is in this hell, nothing may console him; and he cannot believe that he shall ever

be releaſed or comforted. But when he is in heaven, nothing can trouble him; he believeth alſo that none will ever be able to offend or trouble him, albeit it is indeed true, that after this hell he may be comforted and releaſed, and after this heaven he may be troubled and left without conſolation.

Again: this hell and this heaven come about a man in ſuch ſort, that he knoweth not whence they come; and whether they come to him, or depart from him, he can of himſelf do nothing towards it. Of theſe things he can neither give nor take away from himſelf, bring them nor baniſh them, but as it is written, "The wind bloweth where it liſteth, and thou heareſt the ſound thereof," that is to ſay, at this time preſent, "but thou knoweſt not whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth."* And when a man is in one of theſe two ſtates, all is right with him,

* John iii. 8.

and he is as ſafe in hell as in heaven, and ſo long as a man is on earth, it is poſſible for him to paſs ofttimes from the one into the other; nay even within the ſpace of a day and night, and all without his own doing. But when the man is in neither of theſe two ſtates he holdeth converſe with the creature, and wavereth hither and thither, and knoweth not what manner of man he is. Therefore he ſhall never forget either of them, but lay up the remembrance of them in his heart.

CHAP. XII.

Touching that true inward Peace, which Chriſt left to his Diſciples at the laſt.

MANY ſay they have no peace nor reſt, but ſo many croſſes and trials, afflictions and ſorrows, that they know not how they ſhall ever get through them. Now he

who in truth will perceive and take note, perceiveth clearly, that true peace and reſt lie not in outward things; for if it were ſo, the Evil Spirit alſo would have peace when things go according to his will, [which is nowiſe the caſe; for the prophet declareth "There is no peace, ſaith my God, to the wicked."*] And therefore we muſt conſider and ſee what is that peace which Chriſt left to his diſciples at the laſt, when he ſaid: "My peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you."† [We may perceive that in theſe words Chriſt did not mean a bodily and outward peace; for his beloved diſciples, with all his friends and followers, have ever ſuffered, from the beginning, great affliction, perſecution, nay, often martyrdom, as Chriſt himſelf ſaid: "In this world ye ſhall have tribulation."‡ But Chriſt meant that true, inward peace of the heart,

* Iſaiah lvii. 21. † John xiv. 27.
‡ John xvi. 33.

which beginneth here, and endureth for ever hereafter. Therefore he ſaid]: "not as the world giveth," for the world is falſe, and deceiveth in her gifts; [ſhe promiſeth much, and performeth little. Moreover there liveth no man on earth who may always have reſt and peace without troubles and croſſes, with whom things always go according to his will; there is always ſomething to be ſuffered here, turn which way you will. And as ſoon as you are quit of one aſſault, perhaps two come in its place. Wherefore yield thyſelf willingly to them, and ſeek only that true peace of the heart, which none can take away from thee, that thou mayeſt overcome all aſſaults.]

Thus then, Chriſt meant that inward peace which can break through all aſſaults and croſſes of oppreſſion, ſuffering, miſery, humiliation and what more there may be of the like, ſo that a man may be joyful and patient therein, like

the beloved disciples and followers of Christ. Now he who will in love give his whole diligence and might thereto, will verily come to know that true eternal peace which is God Himself, as far as it is possible to a creature; [insomuch that what was bitter to him before, shall become sweet, and his heart shall remain unmoved under all changes, at all times, and after this life, he shall attain unto everlasting peace.]

CHAP. XIII.

How a Man may cast aside Images too soon.

TAULER saith: "there be some men at the present time, who take leave of types and symbols too soon, before they have drawn out all the truth and instruction contained therein." Hence they are scarcely or perhaps never able to understand the

truth aright.* [For ſuch men will follow no one, and lean unto their own underſtandings, and deſire to fly before they are fledged. They would fain mount up to heaven in one flight; albeit Chriſt did not ſo, for after his reſurrection, he remained full forty days with his beloved diſciples. No one can be made perfect in a day. A man muſt begin by denying himſelf, and willingly forſaking all things for God's ſake, and muſt give up his own will, and all his natural inclinations, and ſeparate and cleanſe himſelf thoroughly from all ſins and evil ways. After this, let him humbly take up the croſs and follow Chriſt. Alſo let him take and receive example and inſtruction, reproof, counſel and teaching from de-

* Here Luther's Edition has the following paſſage inſtead of the remainder of this chapter: "therefore we ſhould at all times give diligent heed to the works of God and his commandments, movings and admonitions, and not to the works or commandments or admonitions of men."

vout and perfect ſervants of God, and not follow his own guidance. Thus the work ſhall be eſtabliſhed and come to a good end. And when a man hath thus broken looſe from and outleaped all temporal things and creatures, he may afterwards become perfect in a life of contemplation. For he who will have the one muſt let the other go. There is no other way.]

CHAP. XIV.

Of three Stages by which a Man is led upwards till he attaineth true Perfection.

NOW be aſſured that no one can be enlightened unleſs he be firſt cleanſed or purified and ſtripped. So alſo, no one can be united with God unleſs he be firſt enlightened. Thus there are three ſtages: firſt, the purification; ſecondly, the

enlightening; thirdly, the union. [The purification concerneth thoſe who are beginning or repenting, and is brought to paſs in a threefold wiſe; by contrition and ſorrow for ſin, by full confeſſion, by hearty amendment. The enlightening belongeth to ſuch as are growing, and alſo taketh place in three ways: to wit, by the eſchewal of ſin, by the practice of virtue and good works, and by the willing endurance of all manner of temptation and trials. The union belongeth to ſuch as are perfect, and alſo is brought to paſs in three ways: to wit, by pureneſs and ſingleneſs of heart, by love, and by the contemplation of God, the Creator of all things.]

CHAP. XV.

How all Men are dead in Adam and are made alive again in Chriſt, and of true Obedience and Diſobedience.

LL that in Adam fell and died, was raiſed again and made alive in Chriſt, and all that roſe up and was made alive in Adam, fell and died in Chriſt. But what was that? I anſwer, true obedience and diſobedience. But what is true obedience? I anſwer, that a man ſhould ſo ſtand free, being quit of himſelf, that is, of his I, and Me, and Self, and Mine, and the like, that in all things, he ſhould no more ſeek or regard himſelf, than if he did not exiſt, and ſhould take as little account of himſelf as if he were not, and another had done all his works. Likewiſe he ſhould count all the crea-

tures for nothing. What is there then, which is, and which we may count for ſomewhat? I anſwer, nothing but that which we may call God. Behold! this is very obedience in the truth, and thus it will be in a bleſſed eternity. There nothing is ſought nor thought of, nor loved, but the one thing only.

Hereby we may mark what diſobedience is: to wit, that a man maketh ſome account of himſelf, and thinketh that he is, and knoweth, and can do ſomewhat, and ſeeketh himſelf and his own ends in the things around him, and hath regard to and loveth himſelf, and the like. Man is created for true obedience, and is bound of right to render it to God. And this obedience fell and died in Adam, and roſe again and lived in Chriſt. Yea, Chriſt's human nature was ſo utterly bereft of Self, and apart from all creatures, as no man's ever was, and was nothing elſe

but "a houſe and habitation of God." Neither of that in him which belonged to God, nor of that which was a living human nature and a habitation of God, did he, as man, claim any thing for his own. His human nature did not even take unto itſelf the Godhead, whoſe dwelling it was, nor any thing that this ſame Godhead willed, or did or left undone in him, nor yet any thing of all that his human nature did or ſuffered; but in Chriſt's human nature there was no claiming of any thing, nor ſeeking nor deſire, ſaving that what was due might be rendered to the Godhead, and he did not call this very deſire his own. Of this matter no more can be ſaid or written here, for it is unſpeakable, and was never yet and never will be fully uttered; for it can neither be ſpoken nor written but by Him who is and knows its ground; that is, God Himſelf, who can do all things well.

CHAP. XVI.

Telleth us what is the old Man, and what is the new Man.

AGAIN, when we read of the old man and the new man we muſt mark what that meaneth. The old man is Adam and diſobedience, the Self, the Me, and ſo forth. But the new man is Chriſt and true obedience, [a giving up and denying oneſelf of all temporal things, and ſeeking the honour of God alone in all things.] And when dying and periſhing and the like are ſpoken of, it meaneth that the old man ſhould be deſtroyed, and not ſeek its own either in ſpiritual or in natural things. For where this is brought about in a true divine light, there the new man is born again. In like manner, it hath been

ſaid that man ſhould die unto himſelf, [that is, to earthly pleaſures, conſolations, joys, appetites, the I, the Self, and all that is thereof in man, to which he clingeth and on which he is yet leaning with content, and thinketh much of. Whether it be the man himſelf, or any other creature, whatever it be, it muſt depart and die, if the man is to be brought aright to another mind, according to the truth.]

Thereunto doth St. Paul exhort us, ſaying: "Put off concerning the former converſation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful luſts: . . . . and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteouſneſs and true holineſs."* Now he who liveth to himſelf after the old man, is called and is truly a child of Adam; and though he may give diligence to the ordering of his life, he is ſtill the child and brother

* Epheſians iv. 22. 24.

of the Evil Spirit. But he who liveth in humble obedience and in the new man which is Chriſt, he is, in like manner, the brother of Chriſt and the child of God.

Behold! where the old man dieth and the new man is born, there is that ſecond birth of which Chriſt ſaith, "Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."* Likewiſe St. Paul ſaith; "As in Adam all die, even ſo in Chriſt ſhall all be made alive."† That is to ſay, all who follow Adam in pride, in luſt of the fleſh, and in diſobedience, are dead in ſoul, and never will or can be made alive but in Chriſt. And for this cauſe, ſo long as a man is an Adam or his child, he is without God. Chriſt ſaith, "he who is not with me is againſt me."‡ Now he who is againſt God, is dead before God. Whence it

* John iii. 3. † 1 Cor. xv. 22.
‡ Matt. xii. 30.

followeth that all Adam's children are dead before God. But he who ſtandeth with Chriſt in perfect obedience, he is with God and liveth. As it hath been ſaid already, ſin lieth in the turning away of the creature from the Creator, which agreeth with what we have now ſaid.

For he who is in diſobedience is in ſin, and ſin can never be atoned for or healed but by returning to God, and this is brought to paſs by humble obedience. For ſo long as a man continueth in diſobedience, his ſin can never be blotted out; let him do what he will, it availeth him nothing. Let us be aſſured of this. For diſobedience is itſelf ſin. But when a man entereth into the obedience of the faith, all is healed, and blotted out and forgiven, and not elſe. Inſomuch that if the Evil Spirit himſelf could come into true obedience, he would become an angel again, and all his ſin and wicked-

neſs would be healed and blotted out and forgiven at once. And could an angel fall into diſobedience, he would ſtraightway become an evil ſpirit although he did nothing afreſh.

If then it were poſſible for a man to renounce himſelf and all things, and to live as wholly and purely in true obedience, as Chriſt did in his human nature, ſuch a man were quite without ſin, and were one thing with Chriſt, and the ſame by grace which Chriſt was by nature. But it is ſaid this cannot be. So alſo it is ſaid: "there is none without ſin." But be that as it may, this much is certain; that the nearer we are to perfect obedience, the leſs we ſin, and the farther from it we are, the more we ſin. In brief: whether a man be good, better, or beſt of all; bad, worſe, or worſt of all; ſinful or ſaved before God; it all lieth in this matter of obedience. Therefore it hath been ſaid: the more of Self and Me, the

more of ſin and wickedneſs. So likewiſe it hath been ſaid: the more the Self, the I, the Me, the Mine, that is, ſelf-ſeeking and ſelfiſhneſs abate in a man, the more doth God's I, that is, God Himſelf, increaſe in him.

Now, if all mankind abode in true obedience, there would be no grief nor ſorrow. For if it were ſo, all men would be at one, and none would vex or harm another; ſo alſo, none would lead a life or do any deed contrary to God's will. Whence then ſhould grief or ſorrow ariſe? But now alas! all men, nay the whole world lieth in diſobedience! Now were a man ſimply and wholly obedient as Chriſt was, all diſobedience were to him a ſharp and bitter pain. But though all men were againſt him, they could neither ſhake nor trouble him, for while in this obedience a man were one with God, and God Himſelf were [one with] the man.

Behold now all diſobedience is con-

trary to God, and nothing elſe. In truth, no Thing is contrary to God; no creature nor creature's work, nor any thing that we can name or think of is contrary to God or diſpleaſing to Him, but only diſobedience and the diſobedient man. In ſhort, all that is, is well-pleaſing and good in God's eyes, ſaving only the diſobedient man. But he is ſo diſpleaſing and hateful to God and grieveth Him ſo ſore, that if it were poſſible for human nature to die a hundred deaths, God would willingly ſuffer them all for one diſobedient man, that He might ſlay diſobedience in him, and that obedience might be born again.

Behold! albeit no man may be ſo ſingle and perfect in this obedience as Chriſt was, yet it is poſſible to every man to approach ſo near thereunto as to be rightly called godlike, and "a partaker of the divine nature."* And

* 2 Pet. i. 4.

the nearer a man cometh thereunto, and the more godlike and divine he becometh, the more he hateth all diſobedience, ſin, evil and unrighteouſneſs, and the worſe they grieve him. Diſobedience and ſin are the ſame thing, for there is no ſin but diſobedience, and what is done of diſobedience is all ſin. Therefore all we have to do is to keep ourſelves from diſobedience.

CHAP. XVII.

How we are not to take unto ourſelves what we have done well, but only what we have done amiſs.

BEHOLD! now it is reported there be ſome who vainly think and ſay that they are ſo wholly dead to ſelf and quit of it, as to have reached and abide in a ſtate where they ſuffer nothing and are

moved by nothing, juſt as if all men were living in obedience, or as if there were no creatures. And thus they profeſs to continue always in an even temper of mind, ſo that nothing cometh amiſs to them, howſoever things fall out, well or ill. Nay verily! the matter ſtandeth not ſo, but as we have ſaid. It might be thus, if all men were brought into obedience; but until then, it cannot be.

But it may be aſked: Are not we to be ſeparate from all things, and neither to take unto ourſelves evil nor good? I anſwer, no one ſhall take goodneſs unto himſelf, for that belongeth to God and His goodneſs only; but thanks be unto the man, and everlaſting reward and bleſſings, who is fit and ready to be a dwelling and tabernacle of the Eternal Goodneſs and Godhead, wherein God may exert his power, and will and work without hindrance. But if any now will excuſe himſelf for ſin, by refuſing

to take what is evil unto himſelf, and laying the guilt thereof upon the Evil Spirit, and thus make himſelf out to be quite pure and innocent (as our firſt parents Adam and Eve did while they were yet in paradiſe; when each laid the guilt upon the other), he hath no right at all to do this; for it is written, "there is none without ſin." Therefore I ſay; reproach, ſhame, loſs, woe, and eternal damnation be to the man who is fit and ready and willing that the Evil Spirit and falſehood, lies and all untruthfulneſs, wickedneſs and other evil things ſhould have their will and pleaſure, word and work in him, and make him their houſe and habitation.

CHAP. XVIII.

How that the Life of Chriſt is the nobleſt and beſt Life that ever hath been or can be, and how a careleſs Life of falſe Freedom is the worſt Life that can be.

OF a truth we ought to know and believe that there is no life ſo noble and good and well pleaſing to God, as the life of Chriſt, and yet it is to nature and ſelfiſhneſs the bittereſt life. A life of careleſſneſs and freedom is to nature and the Self and the Me, the ſweeteſt and pleaſanteſt life, but it is not the beſt; and in ſome men may become the worſt. But though Chriſt's life be the moſt bitter of all, yet it is to be preferred above all. Hereby ſhall ye mark this: There is an inward ſight which hath power to perceive the One true Good,

and that it is neither this nor that, but that of which St. Paul ſaith; "when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part ſhall be done away."* By this he meaneth, that the Whole and Perfect excelleth all the fragments, and that all which is in part and imperfect, is as nought compared to the Perfect. Thus likewiſe all knowledge of the parts is ſwallowed up when the Whole is known; and where that Good is known, it cannot but be longed for and loved ſo greatly, that all other love wherewith the man hath loved himſelf and other things, fadeth away. And that inward ſight likewiſe perceiveth what is beſt and nobleſt in all things, and loveth it in the one true Good, and only for the ſake of that true Good.

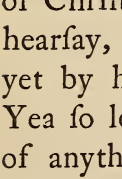
Behold! where there is this inward ſight, the man perceiveth of a truth, that Chriſt's life is the beſt and nobleſt life, and therefore the moſt to be pre-

* 1 Cor. xiii. 10.

ferred, and he willingly accepteth and endureth it, without a queſtion or a complaint, whether it pleaſe or offend nature or other men, whether he like or diſlike it, find it ſweet or bitter and the like. And therefore wherever this perfect and true Good is known, there alſo the life of Chriſt muſt be led, until the death of the body. And he who vainly thinketh otherwiſe is deceived, and he who ſaith otherwiſe, lieth, and in what man the life of Chriſt is not, of him the true Good and eternal Truth will nevermore be known.

CHAP. XIX.

How we cannot come to the true Light and Chriſt's Life, by much Queſtioning or Reading, or by high natural Skill and Reaſon, but by truly renouncing ourſelves and all Things.



ET no one ſuppoſe, that we may attain to this true light and perfect knowledge, or life of Chriſt, by much queſtioning, or by hearſay, or by reading and ſtudy, nor yet by high ſkill and great learning. Yea ſo long as a man taketh account of anything which is this or that, whether it be himſelf, or any other creature; or doeth anything, or frameth a purpoſe, for the ſake of his own likings or deſires, or opinions, or ends, he cometh not unto the life of Chriſt. This hath Chriſt himſelf declared, for he ſaith: "If any man will come after me, let

him deny himſelf, and take up his croſs, and follow me."* "He that taketh not his croſs, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me."† And if he "hate not his father and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren and ſiſters, yea, and his own life alſo, he cannot be my diſciple."‡ He meaneth it thus: "he who doth not forſake and part with every thing, can never know my eternal truth, nor attain unto my life." And though this had never been declared unto us, yet the truth herſelf ſayeth it, for it is ſo of a truth. But ſo long as a man clingeth unto the elements and fragments of this world (and above all to himſelf), and holdeth converſe with them, and maketh great account of them, he is deceived and blinded, and perceiveth what is good no further than as it is moſt convenient and pleaſant to himſelf and profitable to his

* Matt. xvi. 24. † Matt. x. 38.
‡ Luke. xiv. 26.

own ends. Theſe he holdeth to be the higheſt good and loveth above all. [Thus he never cometh to the truth.]

CHAP. XX.

How, ſeeing that the Life of Chriſt is moſt bitter to Nature and Self, Nature will have none of it, and chooſeth a falſe careleſs Life, as is moſt convenient to her.

NOW, ſince the life of Chriſt is every way moſt bitter to nature and the Self and the Me (for in the true life of Chriſt, the Self and the Me and nature muſt be forſaken and loſt, and die altogether), therefore, in each of us, nature hath a horror of it, and thinketh it evil and unjuſt and a folly, and graſpeth after ſuch a life as ſhall be moſt comfortable and pleaſant to herſelf, and ſaith, and believeth alſo in her blindneſs, that ſuch

a life is the beſt poſſible. Now, nothing is ſo comfortable and pleaſant to nature, as a free, careleſs way of life, therefore ſhe clingeth to that, and taketh enjoyment in herſelf and her own powers, and looketh only to her own peace and comfort and the like. And this happeneth moſt of all, where there are high natural gifts of reaſon, for that ſoareth upwards in its own light and by its own power, till at laſt it cometh to think itſelf the true Eternal Light, and giveth itſelf out as ſuch, and is thus deceived in itſelf, and deceiveth other people along with it, who know no better, and alſo are thereunto inclined.

CHAP. XXI.

How a Friend of Chriſt willingly fulfilleth by his outward Works, ſuch Things as muſt be and ought to be, and doth not concern himſelf with the reſt.

OW, it may be aſked, what is the ſtate of a man who followeth the true Light to the utmoſt of his power? I anſwer truly, it will never be declared aright, for he who is not ſuch a man, can neither underſtand nor know it, and he who is, knoweth it indeed; but he cannot utter it, for it is unſpeakable. Therefore let him who would know it, give his whole diligence that he may enter therein; then will he ſee and find what hath never been uttered by man's lips. However, I believe that ſuch a man hath liberty as to his outward walk and converſation, ſo long as they conſiſt

with what muſt be or ought to be; but they may not conſiſt with what he merely willeth to be. But oftentimes a man maketh to himſelf many muſt-be's and ought-to-be's which are falſe. The which ye may ſee hereby, that when a man is moved by his pride or covetouſneſs or other evil diſpoſitions, to do or leave undone anything, he ofttimes ſaith, "It muſt needs be ſo, and ought to be ſo." Or if he is driven to, or held back from anything by the deſire to find favour in men's eyes, or by love, friendſhip, enmity, or the luſts and appetites of his body, he ſaith, "It muſt needs be ſo, and ought to be ſo." Yet behold, that is utterly falſe. Had we no muſt-be's, nor ought-to-be's, but ſuch as God and the Truth ſhow us, and conſtrain us to, we ſhould have leſs, forſooth, to order and do than now; [for we make to ourſelves much diſquietude and difficulty which we might well be ſpared and raiſed above.]

CHAP. XXII.

How ſometimes the Spirit of God, and ſometimes alſo the Evil Spirit may poſſeſs a Man and have the maſtery over him.

IT is written that ſometimes the Devil and his ſpirit do ſo enter into and poſſeſs a man, that he knoweth not what he doeth and leaveth undone, and hath no power over himſelf, but the Evil Spirit hath the maſtery over him, and doeth and leaveth undone in, and with, and through, and by the man what he will. It is true in a ſenſe that all the world is ſubject to and poſſeſſed with the Evil Spirit, that is, with lies, falſehood, and other vices and evil ways; this alſo cometh of the Evil Spirit, but in a different ſenſe.

Now, a man who ſhould be in like

manner poſſeſſed by the Spirit of God, ſo that he ſhould not know what he doeth or leaveth undone, and have no power over himſelf, but the will and Spirit of God ſhould have the maſtery over him, and work, and do, and leave undone with him and by him, what and as God would; ſuch a man were one of thoſe of whom St. Paul ſaith: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God they are the ſons of God,"* and they "are not under the law but under grace,"† and to whom Chriſt ſaith: "For it is not ye that ſpeak, but the Spirit of your Father which ſpeaketh in you."‡

But I fear that for one who is truly poſſeſſed with the Spirit of God, there are a hundred thouſand or an innumerable multitude poſſeſſed with the Evil Spirit. This is becauſe men have more likeneſs to the Evil Spirit than to God. For the Self, the I, the Me and the

* Romans viii. 14. † Romans vi. 14.
‡ Matthew x. 20.

like, all belong to the Evil Spirit, and therefore it is, that he is an Evil Spirit. Behold one or two words can utter all that hath been ſaid by theſe many words: "Be ſimply and wholly bereft of Self." But by theſe many words, the matter hath been more fully ſifted, proved, and ſet forth.

Now men ſay, "I am in no wiſe prepared for this work, and therefore it cannot be wrought in me," and thus they find an excuſe, ſo that they neither are ready nor in the way to be ſo. And truly there is no one to blame for this but themſelves. For if a man were looking and ſtriving after nothing but to find a preparation in all things, and diligently gave his whole mind to ſee how he might become prepared; verily God would well prepare him, for God giveth as much care and earneſtneſs and love to the preparing of a man, as to the pouring in of His Spirit when the man is prepared.

Yet there be certain means thereunto, as the ſaying is, "to learn an art which thou knoweſt not, four things are needful."* The firſt and moſt needful of all is, a great deſire and diligence and conſtant endeavour to learn the art. And where this is wanting, the art will never be learned. The ſecond is, a copy or enſample by which thou mayeſt learn. The third is to give earneſt heed to the maſter, and watch how he worketh, and to be obedient to him in all things, and to truſt him and follow him. The fourth is to put thy own hand to the work, and practiſe it with all induſtry. But where one of theſe four is wanting, the art will never be learned and maſtered. So likewiſe is it with this preparation. For he who hath the firſt, that is, thorough diligence and conſtant, perſevering deſire towards his end, will alſo ſeek and find all that appertaineth thereunto, or is ſerviceable and profit-

* See note, p. 73.

able to it. But he who hath not that earneſtneſs and diligence, love and deſire, ſeeketh not, and therefore findeth not, and therefore remaineth ever unprepared. And therefore he never attaineth unto that end.

CHAP. XXIII.

He who will ſubmit himſelf to God and be obedient to Him, muſt be ready to bear with all Things; to wit, God, himſelf, and all Creatures, and muſt be obedient to them all, whether he have to ſuffer or to do.

THERE be ſome who talk of other ways and preparations to this end, and ſay we muſt lie ſtill under God's hand, and be obedient and reſigned and ſubmit to Him. This is true; for all this would be perfected in a man who ſhould attain to the uttermoſt that can be reached in this pre-

ſent time. But if a man ought and is willing to lie ſtill under God's hand, he muſt and ought alſo to be ſtill under all things, whether they come from God, himſelf, or the creatures, nothing excepted. And he who would be obedient, reſigned and ſubmiſſive to God, muſt and ought to be alſo reſigned, obedient and ſubmiſſive to all things, in a ſpirit of yielding, and not of reſiſtance, and take them in ſilence, reſting on the hidden foundations of his ſoul, and having a ſecret inward patience, that enableth him to take all chances or croſſes willingly, and whatever befalleth, neither to call for nor deſire any redreſs, or deliverance, or reſiſtance, or revenge, but always in a loving, ſincere humility to cry, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!"

Behold! this were a good path to that which is Beſt, and a noble and bleſſed preparation for the fartheſt goal which a man may reach in this preſent

time. This is the lovely life of Chriſt, for he walked in the aforeſaid paths perfectly and wholly unto the end of his bodily life on earth. Therefore there is no other and better way or preparation to the joyful life of Jeſus Chriſt, than this ſame courſe, and to exerciſe oneſelf therein, as much as may be. And of what belongeth thereunto we have already ſaid ſomewhat; nay, all that we have here or elſewhere ſaid and written, is but a way or means to that end. But what the end is, knoweth no man to declare. But let him who would know it, follow my counſel and take the right path thereunto, which is the humble life of Jeſus Chriſt; [let him ſtrive after that with unwearied perſeverance, and ſo, without doubt, he ſhall come to that end which endureth for ever. "For he that endureth to the end ſhall be ſaved."]*

* Matt. x. 22.

CHAP. XXIV.

*How that four Things are needful before a Man can receive divine Truth and be poſſeſſed with the Spirit of God.**

MOREOVER there are yet other ways to the lovely life of Chriſt, beſides thoſe we have ſpoken of: to wit, that God and man ſhould be wholly united, ſo that it can be ſaid of a truth, that God and man are one. This cometh to paſs on this wiſe. Where the Truth always reigneth, ſo that true perfect God and true perfect man are at one, and man ſo giveth

* The heading of this Chapter appears to have no relation to its contents, while it perfectly ſuits the latter half of Chap. xxii. (p. 69), which has nothing correſponding to it in the heading of that chapter. As however the heading of Chap. xxiv. is common both to the Wurtzburg MS. and Luther's editions, the tranſlator has no option but to retain it in its preſent poſition.

place to God, that God Himſelf is there and yet the man too, and this ſame unity worketh continually, and doeth and leaveth undone without any I, and Me, and Mine, and the like; behold, there is Chriſt, and nowhere elſe. Now, ſeeing that here there is true perfect manhood, ſo there is a perfect perceiving and feeling of pleaſure and pain, liking and diſliking, ſweetneſs and bitterneſs, joy and ſorrow, and all that can be perceived and felt within and without. And ſeeing that God is here made man, he is alſo able to perceive and feel love and hatred, evil and good and the like. As a man who is not God, feeleth and taketh note of all that giveth him pleaſure and pain, and it pierceth him to the heart, eſpecially what offendeth him; ſo is it alſo when God and man are one, and yet God is the man; there everything is perceived and felt that is contrary to God and man. And ſince there man becometh nought, and God

alone is everything, ſo is it with that which is contrary to man, and a ſorrow to him. And this muſt hold true of God ſo long as a bodily and ſubſtantial life endureth.

Furthermore, mark ye, that the one Being in whom God and man are united, ſtandeth free of himſelf and of all things, and whatever is in him is there for God's ſake and not for man's, or the creature's. For it is the property of God to be without this and that, and without Self and Me, and without equal or fellow; but it is the nature and property of the creature to ſeek itſelf and its own things, and this and that, here and there; and in all that it doeth and leaveth undone its deſire is to its own advantage and profit. Now where a creature or a man forſaketh and cometh out of himſelf and his own things, there God entereth in with His own, that is, with Himſelf.

CHAP. XXV.

Of two evil Fruits that do ſpring up from the Seed of the Evil Spirit, and are two Siſters who love to dwell together. The one is called ſpiritual Pride and Highmindedneſs, the other is falſe, lawleſs Freedom.

NOW, after that a man hath walked in all the ways that lead him unto the truth, and exerciſed himſelf therein, not ſparing his labour; now, as often and as long as he dreameth that his work is altogether finiſhed, and he is by this time quite dead to the world, and come out from Self and given up to God alone, behold! the Devil cometh and ſoweth his ſeed in the man's heart. From this ſeed ſpring two fruits; the one is ſpiritual fulneſs or pride, the other is falſe, lawleſs freedom. Theſe are two

ſiſters who love to be together. Now, it beginneth on this wiſe: the Devil puffeth up the man, till he thinketh himſelf to have climbed the topmoſt pinnacle, and to have come ſo near to heaven, that he no longer needeth Scripture, nor teaching, nor this nor that, but is altogether raiſed above any need. Whereupon there ariſeth a falſe peace and ſatisfaction with himſelf, and then it followeth that he ſaith or thinketh: "Yea, now I am above all other men, and know and underſtand more than any one in the world; therefore it is certainly juſt and reaſonable that I ſhould be the lord and commander of all creatures, and that all creatures, and eſpecially all men, ſhould ſerve me and be ſubject unto me." And then he ſeeketh and deſireth the ſame, and taketh it gladly from all creatures, eſpecially men, and thinketh himſelf well worthy of all this, and that it is his due, and looketh on men as if they were

the beaſts of the field, and thinketh himſelf worthy of all that miniſtereth to his body and life and nature, in profit, or joy, or pleaſure, or even paſtime and amuſement, and he ſeeketh and taketh it wherever he findeth opportunity. And whatever is done or can be done for him, ſeemeth him all too little and too poor, for he thinketh himſelf worthy of ſtill more and greater honour than can be rendered to him. And of all the men who ſerve him and are ſubject to him, even if they be downright thieves and murderers, he ſaith nevertheleſs, that they have faithful, noble hearts, and have great love and faithfulneſs to the truth and to poor men. And ſuch men are praiſed by him, and he ſeeketh them and followeth after them wherever they be. But he who doth not order himſelf according to the will of theſe highminded men, nor is ſubject unto them, is not ſought after by them, nay, more likely blamed and

ſpoken ill of, even though he were as holy as St. Peter himſelf. And ſeeing that this proud and puffed-up ſpirit thinketh that ſhe needeth neither Scripture, nor inſtruction, nor anything of the kind, therefore ſhe giveth no heed to the admonitions, order, laws and precepts of the holy Chriſtian Church, nor to the Sacraments, but mocketh at them and at all men who walk according to theſe ordinances and hold them in reverence. Hereby we may plainly ſee that thoſe two ſiſters dwell together.

Moreover ſince this ſheer pride thinketh to know and underſtand more than all men beſides, therefore ſhe chooſeth to prate more than all other men, and would fain have her opinions and ſpeeches to be alone regarded and liſtened to, and counteth all that others think and ſay to be wrong, and holdeth it in deriſion as a folly.

CHAP. XXVI.

Touching Poorneſs of Spirit and true Humility, and whereby we may diſcern the true and lawful free Men, whom the Truth hath made free.

BUT it is quite otherwiſe where there is poorneſs of ſpirit, and true humility; and it is ſo becauſe it is found and known of a truth that a man, of himſelf and his own power, is nothing, hath nothing, can do and is capable of nothing but only infirmity and evil. Hence followeth that the man findeth himſelf altogether unworthy of all that hath been or ever will be done for him, by God or the creatures, and that he is a debtor to God and alſo to all the creatures in God's ſtead, both to bear with, and to labour for, and to ſerve them. And therefore

he doth not in any wiſe ſtand up for his own rights, but from the humility of his heart he ſaith, "It is juſt and reaſonable that God and all creatures ſhould be againſt me, and have a right over me, and to me, and that I ſhould not be againſt any one, nor have a right to any thing." Hence it followeth that the man doth not and will not crave or beg for any thing, either from God or the creatures, beyond mere needful things, and for thoſe only with ſhamefacedneſs, as a favour and not as a right. And he will not miniſter unto or gratify his body or any of his natural deſires, beyond what is needful, nor allow that any ſhould help or ſerve him except in caſe of neceſſity, and then always in trembling; for he hath no right to any thing and therefore he thinketh himſelf unworthy of any thing. So likewiſe all his own diſcourſe, ways, words and works ſeem to this man a thing of nought and a folly. Therefore he

ſpeaketh little, and doth not take upon himſelf to admoniſh or rebuke any, unleſs he be conſtrained thereto by love or faithfulneſs towards God, and even then he doth it in fear, and ſo little as may be.

Moreover, when a man hath this poor and humble ſpirit, he cometh to ſee and underſtand aright, how that all men are bent upon themſelves, and inclined to evil and ſin, and that on this account it is needful and profitable that there be order, cuſtoms, law and precepts, to the end that the blindneſs and fooliſhneſs of men may be corrected, and that vice and wickedneſs may be kept under, and conſtrained to ſeemlineſs. For without ordinances, men would be much more miſchievous and ungovernable than dogs and cattle. And few have come to the knowledge of the truth, but what have begun with holy practices and ordinances, and exerciſed themſelves therein ſo long as they knew nothing more nor better.

Therefore one who is poor in ſpirit and of a humble mind doth not deſpiſe or make light of law, order, precepts and holy cuſtoms, nor yet of thoſe who obſerve and cleave wholly to them, but with loving pity and gentle ſorrow, crieth: "Almighty Father, Thou Eternal Truth, I make my lament unto Thee, and it grieveth Thy Spirit too, that through man's blindneſs, infirmity, and ſin, that is made needful and muſt be, which in deed and truth were neither needful nor right." [For thoſe who are perfect are under no law.

So order, laws, precepts and the like are merely an admonition to men who underſtand nothing better and know and perceive not wherefore all law and order is ordained.] And the perfect accept the law along with ſuch ignorant men as underſtand and know nothing better, and practiſe it with them, to the intent that they may be reſtrained thereby, and kept from evil ways, or

if it be poſſible, brought to ſomething higher.

Behold! all that we have ſaid of poverty and humility is ſo of a truth, and we have the proof and witneſs thereof in the pure life of Chriſt, and in his words. For he both practiſed and fulfilled every work of true humility and all other virtues, as ſhineth forth in his holy life, and he ſaith alſo expreſſly: "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart and ye ſhall find reſt unto your ſouls."* Moreover he did not deſpiſe and ſet at nought the law and the commandments, nor yet the men who are under the law. [He ſaith: "I am not come to deſtroy the law or the prophets but to fulfil."] But he ſaith further, that to keep them is not enough, we muſt preſs forward to what is higher and better, as is indeed true. [He ſaith: "Except your righteouſneſs ſhall exceed the righteouſ-

* Matt. xi. 29.

neſs of the Scribes and Phariſees, ye ſhall in no caſe enter into the kingdom of Heaven."* For the law forbiddeth evil works, but Chriſt condemneth alſo evil thoughts; the law alloweth us to take vengeance on our enemies, but Chriſt commandeth us to love them. The law forbiddeth not the good things of this world, but he counſelleth us to deſpiſe them. And he hath ſet his ſeal upon all he ſaid, with his own holy life; for he taught nothing that he did not fulfil in work, and he kept the law and was ſubject unto it to the end of his mortal life.] Likewiſe St. Paul ſaith: "Chriſt was made under the law to redeem them that were under the law."† That is, that he might bring them to ſomething higher and nearer to himſelf. He ſaid again, "The Son of man came not to be miniſtered unto but to miniſter."‡

In a word: in Chriſt's life and

* Matt. v. 20. † Galat. iv. 4. ‡ Matt. xx. 28.

words and works, we find nothing but true, pure humility and poverty ſuch as we have ſet forth. And therefore where God dwelleth in a man, and the man is a true follower of Chriſt, it will be, and muſt be, and ought to be the ſame. But where there is pride, and a haughty ſpirit, and a light careleſs mind, Chriſt is not, nor any true follower of his.

Chriſt ſaid: "my ſoul is troubled, even unto death." He meaneth his bodily death. [That is to ſay: from the time that he was born of Mary, until his death on the croſs, he had not one joyful day, but only trouble, ſorrow and contradiction.] Therefore it is juſt and reaſonable that his ſervants ſhould be even as their Maſter. Chriſt ſaith alſo: "Bleſſed are the poor in ſpirit," (that is, thoſe who are truly humble) "for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven." And thus we find it of a truth, where God is made man. For

in Chriſt and in all his true followers, there muſt needs be thorough humility and poorneſs of ſpirit, a lowly retiring diſpoſition, and a heart laden with a ſecret ſorrow and mourning, ſo long as this mortal life laſteth. And he who dreameth otherwiſe is deceived, and deceiveth others with him as aforeſaid. Therefore nature and Self always avoid this life, and cling to a life of falſe freedom and eaſe as we have ſaid.

Behold! now cometh an Adam or an Evil Spirit, wiſhing to juſtify himſelf and make excuſe, and ſaith; "Thou wilt almoſt have it that Chriſt was bereft of ſelf and the like, yet he ſpake often of himſelf, and glorified himſelf in this and that." Anſwer: when a man in whom the truth worketh, hath and ought to have a will towards any thing, his will and endeavour and works are for no end, but that the truth may be ſeen and manifeſted; and this will

was in Chriſt, and to this end, words and works are needful. And what Chriſt did becauſe it was the moſt profitable and beſt means thereunto, he no more took unto himſelf than any thing elſe that happened. Doſt thou ſay now: "Then there was a Wherefore in Chriſt?" I anſwer, if thou wert to aſk the ſun, "why ſhineſt thou?" he would ſay: "I muſt ſhine, and cannot do otherwiſe, for it is my nature and property; but this my property, and the light I give, is not of myſelf, and I do not call it mine." So likewiſe is it with God and Chriſt and all who are godly and belong unto God. In them is no willing, nor working nor deſiring but has for its end, goodneſs as goodneſs, for the ſake of goodneſs, and they have no other Wherefore than this.

CHAP. XXVII.

How we are to take Chriſt's Words when he bade us forſake all Things; and wherein the Union with the Divine Will ſtandeth.

NOW, according to what hath been ſaid, ye muſt obſerve that when we ſay, as Chriſt alſo ſaith, that we ought to reſign and forſake all things, this is not to be taken in the ſenſe that a man is neither to do nor to purpoſe any thing; for a man muſt always have ſomething to do and to order ſo long as he liveth. But we are to underſtand by it that the union with God ſtandeth not in any man's powers, in his working or abſtaining, perceiving or knowing, nor in that of all the creatures taken together.

Now what is this union? It is that

we ſhould be of a truth purely, ſimply, and wholly at one with the One Eternal Will of God, or altogether without will, ſo that the created will ſhould flow out into the Eternal Will, and be ſwallowed up and loſt therein, ſo that the Eternal Will alone ſhould do and leave undone in us. Now mark what may help or further us towards this end. Behold, neither exerciſes, nor words, nor works, nor any creature nor creature's work can do this. In this wiſe therefore muſt we renounce and forſake all things, that we muſt not imagine or ſuppoſe that any words, works, or exerciſes, any ſkill or cunning or any created thing can help or ſerve us thereto. Therefore we muſt ſuffer theſe things to be what they are, and enter into the union with God. Yet outward things muſt be, and we muſt do and refrain ſo far as is neceſſary, eſpecially we muſt ſleep and wake, walk and ſtand ſtill, ſpeak and be

ſilent and much more of the like. Theſe muſt go on ſo long as we live.

CHAP. XXVIII.

How, after a Union with the divine Will, the inward Man ſtandeth immoveable, the while the outward Man is moved hither and thither.

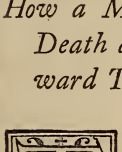
NOW, when this union truly cometh to paſs and becometh eſtabliſhed, the inward man ſtandeth henceforward immoveable in this union; and God ſuffereth the outward man to be moved hither and thither, from this to that, of ſuch things as are neceſſary and right. So that the outward man ſaith in ſincerity, "I have no will to be or not to be, to live or die, to know or not to know, to do or to leave undone and the like; but I am ready for all that is to be, or ought

to be, and obedient thereunto, whether I have to do or to ſuffer." And thus the outward man hath no Wherefore or purpoſe, but only to do his part to further the Eternal Will. For it is perceived of a truth, that the inward man ſhall ſtand immoveable, and that it is needful for the outward man to be moved. And if the inward man have any Wherefore in the actions of the outward man, he ſaith only that ſuch things muſt be and ought to be, as are ordained by the Eternal Will. And where God Himſelf dwelleth in the man, it is thus; as we plainly ſee in Chriſt. Moreover, where there is this union, which is the offspring of a Divine light and dwelleth in its beams, there is no ſpiritual pride, or irreverent ſpirit, but boundleſs humility, and a lowly broken heart; alſo an honeſt blameleſs walk, juſtice, peace, content and all that is of virtue muſt needs be there. Where they are not, there is

no right union, as we have ſaid. For juſt as neither this thing nor that can bring about or further this union, ſo there is nothing which hath power to fruſtrate or hinder it, ſave the man himſelf with his ſelf-will, that doeth him this great wrong. Of this be well aſſured.

CHAP. XXIX.

How a Man may not attain ſo high before Death as not to be moved or touched by outward Things.



HERE be ſome who affirm, that a man, while in this preſent time, may and ought to be above being touched by outward things, and in all reſpects as Chriſt was after his reſurrection. This they try to prove and eſtabliſh by Chriſt's words, "I go before you into Galilee,

there ſhall ye ſee me."* And again, "A ſpirit hath not fleſh and bones as ye ſee me have."† Theſe ſayings they interpret thus: "As ye have ſeen me, and been followers of me, in my mortal body and life, ſo alſo it behoveth you to ſee me and follow me, as I go before you into Galilee; that is to ſay, into a ſtate in which nothing hath power to move or grieve the ſoul; on which ſtate ye ſhall enter, and live and continue therein, before that ye have ſuffered and gone through your bodily death. And as ye ſee me having fleſh and bones, and not liable to ſuffer, ſo ſhall ye likewiſe, while yet in the body and having your mortal nature, ceaſe to feel outward things, were it even the death of the body."

Now, I anſwer, in the firſt place, to this affirmation, that Chriſt did not mean that a man ſhould or could attain

* Matt. xxvi. 32, and xxviii. 7-10.

† Luke xxiv. 39.

unto this ſtate, unleſs he have firſt gone through and ſuffered all that Chriſt did. Now, Chriſt did not attain thereunto, before he had paſſed through and ſuffered his natural death, and what things appertain thereto. Therefore no man can or ought to come to it ſo long as he is mortal and liable to ſuffer. For if ſuch a ſtate were the nobleſt and beſt, and if it were poſſible and right to attain to it, as aforeſaid, in this preſent time, then it would have been attained by Chriſt; for the life of Chriſt is the beſt and nobleſt, the worthieſt and lovelieſt in God's ſight that ever was or will be. Therefore if it was not and could not be ſo with Chriſt, it will never be ſo with any man. Therefore though ſome may imagine and ſay that ſuch a life is the beſt and nobleſt life, yet it is not ſo.

CHAP. XXX.

On what wiſe we may come to be beyond and above all Cuſtom, Order, Law, Precepts and the like.

OME ſay further, that we can and ought to get beyond all virtue, all cuſtom and order, all law, precepts and ſeemlineſs, ſo that all theſe ſhould be laid aſide, thrown off and ſet at nought. Herein there is ſome truth, and ſome falſehood. Behold and mark: Chriſt was greater than his own life, and above all virtue, cuſtom, ordinances and the like, and ſo alſo is the Evil Spirit above them, but with a difference. For Chriſt was and is above them on this wiſe, that his words, and works, and ways, his doings and refrainings, his ſpeech and ſilence, his ſufferings, and whatſoever happened to

him, were not forced upon him, neither did he need them, neither were they of any profit to himſelf. It was and is the ſame with all manner of virtue, order, laws, decency, and the like; for all that may be reached by them is already in Chriſt to perfection. In this ſenſe, that ſaying of St. Paul is true and receiveth its fulfilment, "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the ſons of God," "and are not under the law but under grace."* That meaneth, man need not teach them what they are to do or abſtain from; for their Maſter, that is, the Spirit of God, ſhall verily teach them what is needful for them to know. Likewiſe they do not need that men ſhould give them precepts, or command them to do right and not to do wrong, and the like; for the ſame admirable Maſter who teacheth them what is good or not good, what is higher and lower, and in ſhort

* Rom. viii. 10 and vi. 14.

leadeth them into all truth, He reigneth alſo within them, and biddeth them to hold faſt that which is good, and to let the reſt go, and to Him they give ear. Behold! in this ſenſe they need not to wait upon any law, either to teach or to command them. In another ſenſe alſo they need no law; namely, in order to ſeek or win ſomething thereby or get any advantage for themſelves. For whatever help toward eternal life, or furtherance in the way everlaſting they might obtain from the aid, or counſel, or words, or works of any creature, they poſſeſs already beforehand. Behold! in this ſenſe alſo it is true, that we may riſe above all law and virtue, and alſo above the works and knowledge and powers of any creature.

CHAP. XXXI.

How we are not to caſt off the Life of Chriſt, but practiſe it diligently, and walk in it until Death.

UT that other thing which they affirm, how that we ought to throw off and caſt aſide the life of Chriſt, and all laws and commandments, cuſtoms and order and the like, and pay no heed to them, but deſpiſe and make light of them, is altogether falſe and a lie. Now ſome may ſay;—"ſince neither Chriſt nor others can ever gain anything, either by a Chriſtian life, or by all theſe exerciſes and ordinances, and the like, nor turn them to any account, ſeeing that they poſſeſs already all that can be had through them, what cauſe is there why they ſhould not henceforth eſchew them al-

together? Muſt they ſtill retain and practiſe them?"

Behold, ye muſt look narrowly into this matter. There are two kinds of Light; the one is true and the other is falſe. The true light is that Eternal Light which is God; or elſe it is a created light, but yet divine, which is called grace. And theſe are both the true Light. So is the falſe light Nature or of Nature. But why is the firſt true, and the ſecond falſe? This we can better perceive than ſay or write. To God, as Godhead, appertain neither will, nor knowledge, nor manifeſtation, nor anything that we can name, or ſay, or conceive. But to God as God,* it belongeth to expreſs Himſelf, and know and love Himſelf, and to reveal Himſelf to Himſelf; and all this without any creature. And all this reſteth in God as a ſubſtance but not as a working, ſo long as there is no creature.

* That is, as a Perſon;—"God" being uſed here as a proper name.—Tr.

And out of this expreſſing and revealing of Himſelf unto Himſelf, ariſeth the diſtinction of Perſons. But when God as God is made man, or where God dwelleth in a godly man, or one who is "made a partaker of the divine nature," in ſuch a man ſomewhat appertaineth unto God which is His own, and belongeth to Him only and not to the creature. And without the creature, this would lie in His own Self as a Subſtance or well-ſpring, but would not be manifeſted or wrought out into deeds. Now God will have it to be exerciſed and clothed in a form, for it is there only to be wrought out and executed. What elſe is it for? Shall it lie idle? What then would it profit? As good were it that it had never been; nay better, for what is of no uſe exiſteth in vain, and that is abhorred by God and Nature. However God will have it wrought out, and this cannot come to paſs (which it ought to do), without the creature. Nay, if there ought not to be, and

were not this and that—works, and a world full of real things, and the like,—what were God Himſelf, and what had He to do, and whoſe God would He be? Here we muſt turn and ſtop, or we might follow this matter and grope along until we knew not where we were, nor how we ſhould find our way out again.

CHAP. XXXII.

How God is a true, ſimple, perfect Good, and how He is a Light and a Reaſon and all Virtues, and how what is higheſt and beſt, that is, God, ought to be moſt loved by us.

IN ſhort I would have you to underſtand, that God (in ſo far as He is good) is goodneſs as goodneſs, and not this or that good. But here mark one thing. Behold! what is ſometimes here and ſometimes there is not everywhere, and above all things and places; ſo alſo,

what is to-day, or to-morrow, is not always, at all times, and above all time; and what is ſome Thing, this or that, is not all things and above all things. Now behold, if God were ſome thing, this or that, he would not be all in all, and above all, as He is; and ſo alſo, He would not be true Perfection. Therefore God is, and yet He is neither this nor that which the creature, as creature, can perceive, name, conceive or expreſs. Therefore if God (in ſo far as He is good) were this or that good, He would not be all good, and therefore he would not be the One Perfect Good, which He is. Now God is alſo a Light and a Reaſon,* the property of which is to give light and ſhine, and take knowledge; and inaſmuch as God is Light and Reaſon, He muſt give light and perceive. And all this giving and perceiving of light

* Cognition is the word which comes neareſt to the original *Erkenntniſs*, but would not harmonize with the ſtyle of the tranſlation.

exiſteth in God without the creature; not as a work fulfilled, but as a ſubſtance or well-ſpring. But for it to flow out into a work, ſomething really done and accompliſhed,* there muſt be creatures through whom this can come to paſs. Look ye: where this Reaſon and Light is at work in a creature, it perceiveth and knoweth and teacheth what itſelf is; how that it is good in itſelf and neither this thing nor that thing. This Light and Reaſon knoweth and teacheth men, that it is a true, ſimple, perfect Good, which is neither this nor that ſpecial good, but comprehendeth every kind of good.

Now, having declared that this Light teacheth the One Good, what doth it teach concerning it? Give heed to this. Behold! even as God is the one Good, and Light and Reaſon, ſo is He alſo Will and Love and Juſtice and Truth, and in ſhort all virtues. But all theſe

* Or, be realized.

are in God one Subſtance, and none of them can be put in exerciſe and wrought out into deeds without the creature, for in God, without the creature, they are only as a Subſtance or well-ſpring, not as a work. But where the One, who is yet all theſe, layeth hold of a creature, and taketh poſſeſſion of it, and directeth and maketh uſe of it, ſo that He may perceive in it ſomewhat of His own, behold, in ſo far as He is Will and Love, He is taught of Himſelf, ſeeing that He is alſo Light and Reaſon, and He willeth nothing but that One thing which He is.

Behold! in ſuch a creature, there is no longer anything willed or loved but that which is good, becauſe it is good, and for no other reaſon than that it is good, not becauſe it is this or that, or pleaſeth or diſpleaſeth ſuch a one, is pleaſant or painful, bitter or ſweet, or what not. All this is not aſked about nor looked at. And ſuch

a creature doth nothing for its own ſake, or in its own name, for it hath quitted all Self, and Me, and Mine, and We and Ours, and the like, and theſe are departed. It no longer ſaith, "I love myſelf, or this or that, or what not." And if you were to aſk Love, "what loveſt thou?" ſhe would anſwer, "I love Goodneſs." "Wherefore?" "Becauſe it is good, and for the ſake of Goodneſs." So it is good and juſt and right to deem that if there were ought better than God, that muſt be loved better than God. And thus God loveth not Himſelf as Himſelf, but as Goodneſs. And if there were, and He knew, ought better than God, He would love that and not Himſelf. Thus the Self and the Me are wholly ſundered from God, and belong to Him only in ſo far as they are neceſſary for Him to be a Perſon.

Behold! all that we have ſaid muſt

indeed come to pafs in a godlike man, or one who is truly "made a partaker of the divine nature;" for elfe he would not be truly fuch.

CHAP. XXXIII.

How when a Man is made truly godlike, his Love is pure and unmixed, and he loveth all Creatures, and doth his beft for them.

ENCE it followeth, that in a truly godlike man, his love is pure and unmixed, and full of kindnefs, infomuch that he cannot but love in fincerity all men and things, and wifh well, and do good to them, and rejoice in their welfare. Yea, let them do what they will to fuch a man, do him wrong or kindnefs, bear him love or hatred or the like, yea, if one could kill fuch a man a hundred times over, and he always came to life again, he could not but love the very man

who had ſo often ſlain him, although he had been treated ſo unjuſtly, and wickedly, and cruelly by him, and could not but wiſh well, and do well to him, and ſhow him the very greateſt kindneſs in his power, if the other would but only receive and take it at his hands. The proof and witneſs whereof may be ſeen in Chriſt; for he ſaid to Judas, when he betrayed him: "Friend, wherefore art thou come?" Juſt as if he had ſaid: "Thou hateſt me, and art mine enemy, yet I love thee and am thy friend. Thou deſireſt and rejoiceſt in my affliction, and doſt the worſt thou canſt unto me; yet I deſire and wiſh thee all good, and would fain give it thee, and do it for thee, if thou wouldſt but take and receive it." As though God in human nature were ſaying: "I am pure, ſimple Goodneſs, and therefore I cannot will, or deſire, or rejoice in, or do or give anything but goodneſs. If I am to reward thee for thy evil and

wickedneſs, I muſt do it with goodneſs, for I am and have nothing elſe." Hence therefore God, in a man who is "made partaker of His nature," deſireth and taketh no revenge for all the wrong that is or can be done unto him. This we ſee in Chriſt, when he ſaid: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Likewiſe it is God's property that He doth not conſtrain any by force to do or not to do anything, but He alloweth every man to do and leave undone according to his will, whether it be good or bad, and reſiſteth none. This too we ſee in Chriſt, who would not reſiſt or defend himſelf when his enemies laid hands on him. And when Peter would have defended him, he ſaid unto Peter: "Put up thy ſword into the ſheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, ſhall I not drink it?" Neither may a man who is made a partaker of the divine nature, oppreſs

or grieve any one. That is, it never entereth into his thoughts, or intents, or wiſhes, to cauſe pain or diſtreſs to any, either by deed or neglect, by ſpeech or ſilence.

CHAP. XXXIV.

How that if a Man will attain to that which is beſt, he muſt forſwear his own Will; and he who helpeth a Man to his own Will helpeth him to the worſt Thing he can.

SOME may ſay: "Now ſince God willeth and deſireth and doeth the beſt that may be to every one, He ought ſo to help each man and order things for him, that they ſhould fall out according to his will and fulfil his deſires, ſo that one might be a Pope, another a Biſhop, and ſo forth." Be aſſured, he who helpeth a man to his own will, helpeth him to the worſt that he can. For the

more a man followeth after his own ſelf-will, and ſelf-will groweth in him, the farther off is he from God, the true Good, [for nothing burneth in hell but ſelf-will. Therefore it hath been ſaid, "Put off thine own will, and there will be no hell."] Now God is very willing to help a man and bring him to that which is beſt in itſelf, and is of all things the beſt for man. But to this end, all ſelf-will muſt depart, as we have ſaid. And God would fain give man his help and counſel thereunto, for ſo long as a man is ſeeking his own good, he doth not ſeek what is beſt for him, and will never find it. For a man's higheſt good would be and truly is, that he ſhould not ſeek himſelf nor his own things, nor be his own end in any reſpect, either in things ſpiritual or things natural, but ſhould ſeek only the praiſe and glory of God and His holy will. This doth God teach and admoniſh us.

Let him therefore who wiſheth that God ſhould help him to what is beſt, and beſt for him, give diligent heed to God's counſels and teachings, and obey His commandments; thus, and not elſe, will he have, and hath already, God's help. Now God teacheth and admoniſheth man to forſake himſelf and all things, and to follow Him only. "For he who loveth his ſoul,"* that is himſelf, and will guard it and keep it, "he ſhall loſe it;" that is, he who ſeeketh himſelf and his own advantage in all things, in ſo doing loſeth his ſoul. "But he who hateth his ſoul for my ſake ſhall keep it unto life eternal;" that is,

* Mark viii. 35. Our authorized verſion uſes the word "life," in this verſe, but as that would not quite bring out the force of the original, I have ventured to uſe the ſame word for ψυχὴ here, by which it is tranſlated in the two ſucceeding verſes.

Except in this and another paſſage, where in quoting John iii. 8. πνεῦμα is tranſlated, as in Luther's verſion, *Spirit* inſtead of Wind, our authorized verſion has been always adhered to.—Tr.

he who forſaketh himſelf and his own things, and giveth up his own will, and fulfilleth God's will, his ſoul will be kept and preſerved unto Life Eternal.

CHAP. XXXV.

How there is deep and true Humility and Poorneſs of Spirit in a Man who is "made a Partaker of the Divine Nature."

OREOVER, in a man who is "made a partaker of the divine nature," there is a thorough and deep humility, and where this is not, the man hath not been "made a partaker of the divine nature." So Chriſt taught in words and fulfilled in works. And this humility ſpringeth up in the man, becauſe in the true Light he ſeeth (as it alſo really is) that Subſtance, Life, Perceiving, Knowledge, Power, and what is thereof, do all be-

long to the True Good, and not to the creature; but that the creature of itſelf is nothing and hath nothing, and that when it turneth itſelf aſide from the True Good in will or in works, nothing is left to it but pure evil. And therefore it is true to the very letter, that the creature, as creature, hath no worthineſs in itſelf, and no right to anything, and no claim over any one, either over God or over the creature, and that it ought to give itſelf up to God and ſubmit to Him becauſe this is juſt. And this is the chiefeſt and moſt weighty matter.

Now, if we ought to be, and deſire to be, obedient and ſubmit unto God, we muſt alſo ſubmit to what we receive at the hands of any of his creatures, or our ſubmiſſion is all falſe. From this latter article floweth true humility, as indeed it doth alſo from the former.* And unleſs this verily ought to be, and

* Namely, God's having a right to our obedience.

were wholly agreeable to God's juſtice, Chriſt would not have taught it in words, and fulfilled it in his life. And herein there is a veritable manifeſtation of God; and it is ſo of a truth, that of God's truth and juſtice this creature ſhall be ſubject to God and all creatures, and no thing or perſon ſhall be ſubject or obedient to her. God and all the creatures have a right over her and to her, but ſhe hath a right to nothing: ſhe is a debtor to all, and nothing is owing to her, ſo that ſhe ſhall be ready to bear all things from others, and alſo if needs be to do all things for others. And out of this groweth that poorneſs of ſpirit of which Chriſt ſaid: "Bleſſed are the poor in ſpirit" (that is to ſay, the truly humble) "for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven." All this hath Chriſt taught in words and fulfilled with his life.

CHAP. XXXVI.

How nothing is contrary to God but Sin only; and what Sin is in Kind and Act.

FURTHER ye shall mark: when it is said that such a thing, or such a deed is contrary to God, or that such a thing is hateful to God and grieveth His Spirit, ye must know that no creature is contrary to God, or hateful or grievous unto Him, in so far as it is, liveth, knoweth, hath power to do, or produce ought, and so forth, for all this is not contrary to God. That an evil spirit, or a man is, liveth, and the like, is altogether good and of God; for God is the Being of all that are, and the Life of all that live, and the Wisdom of all the wise; for all things have their being more truly in God than in themselves,

and alſo all their powers, knowledge, life, and the reſt; for if it were not ſo, God would not be all good. And thus all creatures are good. Now what is good is agreeable to God, and He will have it. Therefore it cannot be contrary to Him.

But what then is there which is contrary to God and hateful to Him? Nothing but Sin. But what is Sin? Mark this: Sin is nothing elſe than that the creature willeth otherwiſe than God willeth, and contrary to Him. Each of us may ſee this in himſelf; for he who willeth otherwiſe than I, or whoſe will is contrary to mine, is my foe; but he who willeth the ſame as I, is my friend, and I love him. It is even ſo with God: and that is ſin, and is contrary to God, and hateful and grievous to Him. And he who willeth, ſpeaketh, or is ſilent, doeth or leaveth undone, otherwiſe than as I will, is contrary to me, and an offence unto

me. So it is alſo with God: when a man willeth otherwiſe than God, or contrary to God, whatever he doeth or leaveth undone, in ſhort all that proceedeth from him, is contrary to God, and is ſin. And whatſoever Will willeth otherwiſe than God, is againſt God's will. As Chriſt ſaid: "he who is not with me is againſt me." Hereby may each man ſee plainly whether or not he be without ſin, and whether or not he be committing ſin, and what ſin is, and how ſin ought to be atoned for, and wherewith it may be healed. And this contradiction to God's will is what we call, and is, diſobedience. And therefore Adam, the I, the Self, Self-will, Sin, or the Old Man, the turning aſide or departing from God, do all mean one and the ſame thing.

CHAP. XXXVII.

How in God, as God, there can neither be Grief, Sorrow, Diſpleaſure, nor the like, but how it is otherwiſe in a Man who is "made a Partaker of the Divine Nature."

IN God, as God, neither ſorrow nor grief nor diſpleaſure can have place, and yet God is grieved on account of men's ſins. Now ſince grief cannot befall God without the creature, this cometh to paſs where He is made man, or when He dwelleth in a godlike man. And there, behold, ſin is ſo hateful to God, and grieveth Him ſo ſore, that He would willingly ſuffer agony and death, if one man's ſins might be thereby waſhed out. And if He were aſked whether He would rather live and that ſin ſhould remain, or die and deſtroy ſin by His death, He

would anſwer that He would a thouſand times rather die. For to God one man's ſin is more hateful, and grieveth Him worſe than His own agony and death. Now if one man's ſin grieveth God ſo ſore, what muſt the ſins of all men do? Hereby ye may conſider, how greatly man grieveth God with his ſins.

And therefore where God is made man, or when He dwelleth in a truly godlike man, nothing is complained of but ſin, and nothing elſe is hateful; for all that is, and is done, without ſin, is as God will have it, and is His. But the mourning and ſorrow of a truly godlike man on account of ſin, muſt and ought to laſt until death, ſhould he live till the day of judgment, or for ever. From this cauſe aroſe that hidden anguiſh of Chriſt, of which none can tell or knoweth ought ſave himſelf alone, and therefore is it called a myſtery.

Moreover, this is an attribute of God, which He will have, and is well pleaſed to ſee in a man; and it is indeed God's own, for it belongeth not unto the man, he cannot make ſin to be ſo hateful to himſelf. And where God findeth this grief for ſin, he loveth and eſteemeth it more than ought elſe; becauſe it is, of all things, the bittereſt and ſaddeſt that man can endure.

All that is here written touching this divine attribute, which God will have man to poſſeſs, that it may be brought into exerciſe in a living ſoul, is taught us by that true Light, which alſo teacheth the man in whom this godlike ſorrow worketh, not to take it unto himſelf, any more than if he were not there. For ſuch a man feeleth in himſelf that he hath not made it to ſpring up in his heart, and that it is none of his, but belongeth to God alone.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

How we are to put on the Life of Christ from Love, and not for the sake of Reward, and how we must never grow careless concerning it, or cast it off.

OW, wherever a man hath been made a partaker of the divine nature, in him is fulfilled the best and noblest life, and the worthiest in God's eyes, that hath been or can be. And of that eternal love which loveth Goodness as Goodness and for the sake of Goodness, a true, noble, Christ-like life is so greatly beloved, that it will never be forsaken or cast off. Where a man hath tasted this life, it is impossible for him ever to part with it, were he to live until the Judgment Day. And though he must die a thousand deaths, and though all the

ſufferings that ever befell all creatures could be heaped upon him, he would rather undergo them all, than fall away from this excellent life; and if he could exchange it for an angel's life, he would not.

This is our anſwer to the queſtion, "if a man, by putting on Chriſt's life, can get nothing more than he hath already, and ſerve no end, what good will it do him?" This life is not choſen in order to ſerve any end, or to get anything by it, but for love of its nobleneſs, and becauſe God loveth and eſteemeth it ſo greatly. And whoever ſaith that he hath had enough of it, and may now lay it aſide, hath never taſted nor known it; for he who hath truly felt or taſted it, can never give it up again. And he who hath put on the life of Chriſt with the intent to win or deſerve ought thereby, hath taken it up as an hireling and not for love, and is altogether without it. For

he who doth not take it up for love, hath none of it at all; he may dream indeed that he hath put it on, but he is deceived. Chriſt did not lead ſuch a life as his for the ſake of reward, but out of love; and love maketh ſuch a life light and taketh away all its hardſhips, ſo that it becometh ſweet and is gladly endured. But to him who hath not put it on from love, but hath done ſo, as he dreameth, for the ſake of reward, it is utterly bitter and a wearineſs, and he would fain be quit of it. And it is a ſure token of an hireling that he wiſheth his work were at an end. But he who truly loveth it, is not offended at its toil nor ſuffering, nor the length of time it laſteth. Therefore it is written, "to ſerve God and live to Him, is eaſy to him who doeth it." Truly it is ſo to him who doth it for love, but it is hard and weariſome to him who doth it for hire. It is the ſame with all virtue and good works, and likewiſe

with order, laws, obedience to precepts, and the like. But God rejoiceth more over one man who truly loveth, than over a thouſand hirelings.

CHAP. XXXIX.

How God will have Order, Cuſtom, Meaſure, and the like in the Creature, ſeeing that he cannot have them without the Creature, and of four ſorts of Men who are concerned with this Order, Law, and Cuſtom.

IT is ſaid, and truly, God is above and without cuſtom, meaſure, and order, and yet giveth to all things their cuſtom, order, meaſure, fitneſs, and the like. The which is to be thus underſtood. God will have all theſe to be, and they cannot have a being in Himſelf without the creature, for in God, apart from the creature, there is neither order nor

diſorder, cuſtom nor chance, and ſo forth; therefore He will have things ſo that theſe ſhall be, and ſhall be put in exerciſe. For wherever there is word, work, or change, theſe muſt be either according to order, cuſtom, meaſure and fitneſs, or according to unfitneſs and diſorder. Now fitneſs and order are better and nobler than their contraries.

But ye muſt mark: There are four ſorts of men who are concerned with order, laws, and cuſtoms. Some keep them neither for God's ſake, nor to ſerve their own ends, but from conſtraint: theſe have as little to do with them as may be, and find them a burden and heavy yoke. The ſecond ſort obey for the ſake of reward: theſe are men who know nothing beſide, or better than, laws and precepts, and imagine that by keeping them they may obtain the kingdom of Heaven and Eternal Life, and not otherwiſe; and him who practiſeth many ordinances they think to be holy, and him who omitteth any

tittle of them they think to be loſt. Such men are very much in earneſt and give great diligence to the work, and yet they find it a wearineſs. The third ſort are wicked, falſe-hearted men, who dream and declare that they are perfect and need no ordinances, and make a mock of them.

The fourth are thoſe who are enlightened with the True Light, who do not practiſe theſe things for reward, for they neither look nor deſire to get anything thereby, but all that they do is from love alone. And theſe are not ſo anxious and eager to accompliſh much and with all ſpeed as the ſecond ſort, but rather ſeek to do things in peace and good leiſure; and if ſome not weighty matter be neglected, they do not therefore think themſelves loſt, for they know very well that order and fitneſs are better than diſorder, and therefore they chooſe to walk orderly, yet know at the ſame time that their ſalvation hangeth not thereon. There-

fore they are not in so great anxiety as the others. These men are judged and blamed by both the other parties, for the hirelings say that they neglect their duties and accuse them of being unrighteous, and the like; and the others, (that is, the Free Spirits,*) hold them in derision, and say that they cleave unto weak and beggarly elements, and the like. But these enlightened men keep the middle path, which is also the best; for a lover of God is better and dearer to him than a hundred thousand hirelings. It is the same with all their doings.

Furthermore, ye must mark, that to receive God's commands and his counsel and all his teaching, is the privilege of the inward man, after that he is united with God. And where there is such a union, the outward man is surely taught and ordered by the inward man, so that no outward commandment or

* This is evidently an allusion to the "Brethren of the Free Spirit," mentioned in the Historical Introduction.

teaching is needed. But the commandments and laws of men belong to the outer man, and are needful for thoſe men who know nothing better, for elſe they would not know what to do and what to refrain from, and would become like unto the dogs or other beaſts.

CHAP. XL.

A good Account of the Falſe Light and its Kind.

NOW I have ſaid that there is a Falſe Light; but I muſt tell you more particularly what it is, and what belongeth thereunto. Behold, all that is contrary to the True Light belongeth unto the Falſe. To the True Light it belongeth of neceſſity, that it ſeeketh not to deceive, nor conſenteth that any ſhould be wronged or deceived, neither can it be deceived.

But the falſe is deceived and a deluſion, and deceiveth others along with itſelf. For God deceiveth no man, nor willeth that any ſhould be deceived, and ſo it is with His True Light. Now mark, the True Light is God or divine, but the Falſe Light is Nature or natural. Now it belongeth to God, that He is neither this nor that, neither willeth nor deſireth, nor ſeeketh anything in the man whom He hath made a partaker of the divine nature, ſave Goodneſs as Goodneſs, and for the ſake of Goodneſs. This is the token of the True Light. But to the Creature and Nature it belongeth to be ſomewhat, this or that, and to intend and ſeek ſome thing, this or that, and not ſimply what is good without any Wherefore. And as God and the True Light are without all ſelf-will, ſelfiſhneſs, and ſelf-ſeeking, ſo do the I, the Me, the Mine, and the like, belong unto the natural and falſe Light; for in all

things it ſeeketh itſelf and its own ends, rather than Goodneſs for the ſake of Goodneſs. This is its property, and the property of nature or the carnal man in each of us.

Now mark how it firſt cometh to be deceived. It doth not deſire nor chooſe Goodneſs as Goodneſs, and for the ſake of Goodneſs, but deſireth and chooſeth itſelf and its own ends, rather than the Higheſt Good; and this is an error, and is the firſt deception.

Secondly, it dreameth itſelf to be that which it is not, for it dreameth itſelf to be God, and is truly nothing but nature. And becauſe it imagineth itſelf to be God, it taketh to itſelf what belongeth to God; and not that which is God's, when He is made man, or dwelleth in a godlike man, but that which is God's, and belongeth unto Him, as He is in eternity, without the creature. For, as it is ſaid, God needeth nothing, is free, not bound to work,

apart by himſelf, above all things, and ſo forth (which is all true); and God is unchangeable, not to be moved by anything, and is without conſcience, and what He doeth that is well done; "So will I be," ſaith the Falſe Light, "for the more like God one is, the better one is, and therefore I will be like God and will be God, and will ſit and go and ſtand at His right hand:" as Lucifer the Evil Spirit alſo ſaid.* Now God in Eternity is without contradiction, ſuffering and grief, and nothing can hurt or vex him of all that is or befalleth. But with God, when He is made Man, it is otherwiſe.

In a word: all that can be deceived is deceived by this Falſe Light. Now ſince all is deceived by this Falſe Light that can be deceived, and all that is creature and nature, and all that is not God nor of God, may be deceived, and ſince this Falſe Light itſelf is nature, it

* Iſaiah xiv. 13, 14.

is poſſible for it to be deceived. And therefore it becometh and is deceived by itſelf, in that it riſeth and climbeth to ſuch a height that it dreameth itſelf to be above nature, and fancieth it to be impoſſible for nature or any creature to get ſo high, and therefore it cometh to imagine itſelf God. And hence it taketh unto itſelf all that belongeth unto God, and ſpecially what is His as He is in Eternity, and not as He is made Man. Therefore it thinketh and declareth itſelf to be above all works, words, cuſtoms, laws and order, and above that life which Chriſt led in the body which he poſſeſſed in his holy human nature. So likewiſe it profeſſeth to remain unmoved by any of the creature's works; whether they be good or evil, againſt God or not, is all alike to it; and it keepeth itſelf apart from all things, like God in Eternity, and all that belongeth to God and to no creature it taketh unto itſelf, and vainly

dreameth that this belongeth unto it; and deemeth itſelf well worthy of all this, and that it is juſt and right that all creatures ſhould ſerve it, and do it homage. And thus no contradiction, ſuffering or grief is left unto it; indeed nothing but a mere bodily and carnal perceiving: this muſt remain until the death of the body, and what ſuffering may accrue therefrom. Furthermore, this Falſe Light imagineth, and ſaith, that it has got beyond Chriſt's life in the fleſh, and that outward things have loſt all power to touch it or give it pain, as it was with Chriſt after his reſurrection, together with many other ſtrange and falſe conceits which ariſe and grow up from theſe.

And now ſince this Falſe Light is nature, it poſſeſſeth the property of nature, which is to intend and ſeek itſelf and its own in all things, and what may be moſt expedient, eaſy and pleaſant to nature and itſelf. And becauſe

it is deceived, it imagineth and proclaimeth it to be beſt that each ſhould ſeek and do what is beſt for himſelf. It refuſeth alſo to take knowledge of any Good but its own, that which it vainly fancieth to be Good. And if one ſpeak to it of the One, true, everlaſting Good, which is neither this nor that, it knoweth nothing thereof, and thinketh ſcorn of it. And this is not unreaſonable, for nature as nature cannot attain thereunto. Now this Falſe Light is merely nature, and therefore it cannot attain thereunto.

Further, this Falſe Light ſaith that it hath got above conſcience and the ſenſe of ſin, and that whatever it doeth is right. Yea, it was ſaid by ſuch a falſe free ſpirit, who was in this error, that if he had killed ten men he ſhould have as little ſenſe of guilt as if he had killed a dog. Briefly: this falſe and deceived Light fleeth all that is harſh and contrary to nature, for this belongeth

to it, ſeeing that it is nature. And ſeeing alſo that it is ſo utterly deceived as to dream that it is God, it were ready to ſwear by all that is holy, that it knoweth truly what is beſt, and that both in belief and practice it hath reached the very ſummit. For this cauſe it cannot be converted or guided into the right path, even as it is with the Evil Spirit.

Mark further: in ſo far as this Light imagineth itſelf to be God and taketh his attributes unto itſelf, it is Lucifer, the Evil Spirit; but in ſo far as it ſetteth at nought the life of Chriſt, and other things belonging to the True Light, which have been taught and fulfilled by Chriſt, it is Antichriſt, for it teacheth contrary to Chriſt. And as this Light is deceived by its own cunning and diſcernment, ſo all that is not God, or of God, is deceived by it, that is, all men who are not enlightened by the True Light and its love. For all

who are enlightened by the True Light can never more be deceived, but whoſo hath it not and chooſeth to walk by the Falſe Light, he is deceived.

This cometh herefrom, that all men in whom the True Light is not, are bent upon themſelves, and think much of themſelves, and ſeek and propoſe their own ends in all things, and whatever is moſt pleaſant and convenient to themſelves they hold to be beſt. And whoſo declareth the ſame to be beſt, and helpeth and teacheth them to attain it, him they follow after, and maintain to be the beſt and wiſeſt of teachers. Now the Falſe Light teacheth them this very doctrine, and ſhoweth them all the means to come by their deſire; therefore all thoſe follow after it, who know not the True Light. And thus they are together deceived.

It is ſaid of Antichriſt, that when he cometh, he who hath not the ſeal of God in his forehead, followeth after him, but

as many as have the ſeal follow not after him. This agreeth with what hath been ſaid. It is indeed true, that it is good for a man that he ſhould deſire, or come by his own good. But this cannot come to paſs ſo long as a man is ſeeking, or purpoſing his own good; for if he is to find and come by his own higheſt good, he muſt loſe it that he may find it. [As Chriſt ſaid: "He who loveth his life ſhall loſe it." That is; he ſhall forſake and die to the deſires of the fleſh, and ſhall not obey his own will nor the luſts of the body, but obey the commands of God and thoſe who are in authority over Him, and not ſeek his own, either in ſpiritual or natural things, but only the praiſe and glory of God in all things. For he who thus loſeth his life ſhall find it again in Eternal Life. That is: all the goodneſs, help, comfort, and joy which are in the creature, in heaven or on earth, a true lover of God findeth compre-

hended in God Himſelf; yea, unſpeakably more, and as much nobler and more perfect as God the Creator is better, nobler, and more perfect than His creature. But by theſe excellences in the creature the Falſe Light is deceived, and ſeeketh nothing but itſelf and its own in all things. Therefore it cometh never to the right way.]

Further, this Falſe Light ſaith, that we ſhould be without conſcience or ſenſe of ſin, and that it is a weakneſs and folly to have anything to do with them: and this it will prove by ſaying that Chriſt was without conſcience and ſenſe of ſin. We may anſwer and ſay: Satan is alſo without them, and is none the better for that. Mark what a ſenſe of ſin is. It is that we perceive how man has turned away from God in his will (this is what we call ſin), and that this is man's fault, not God's, for God is guiltleſs of ſin. Now, who is there that knoweth himſelf to be free

from ſin ſave Chriſt alone? Scarcely will any other affirm this. Now he who is without ſenſe of ſin is either Chriſt or the Evil Spirit.

Briefly: where this True Light is, there is a true, juſt life ſuch as God loveth and eſteemeth. And if the man's life is not perfect as Chriſt's was, yet it is framed and builded after his, and his life is loved, together with all that agreeth with decency, order, and all other virtues, and all Self-will, I, Mine, Me, and the like, is loſt; nothing is purpoſed or ſought but Goodneſs, for the ſake of Goodneſs, and as Goodneſs. But where that Falſe Light is, there men become heedleſs of Chriſt's life and all virtue, and ſeek and intend whatever is convenient and pleaſant to nature. From this ariſeth a falſe, licentious freedom, ſo that men grow regardleſs and careleſs of everything. For the True Light is God's ſeed, and therefore it bringeth forth the fruits of God. And

ſo likewiſe the Falſe Light is the ſeed of the Devil; and where that is ſown, the fruits of the Devil ſpring up—nay, the very Devil himſelf. This ye may underſtand by giving heed to what hath been ſaid.

CHAP. XLI.

How that he is to be called, and is truly, a Partaker of the Divine Nature, who is illuminated with the Divine Light, and inflamed with Eternal Love, and how Light and Knowledge are worth nothing without Love.

SOME may aſk, "What is it to be 'a partaker of the divine nature,' or a godlike man?" Anſwer: he who is imbued with or illuminated by the Eternal or divine Light, and inflamed or conſumed with Eternal or divine love, he is a godlike man and a partaker of the divine na-

ture; and of the nature of this True Light we have ſaid ſomewhat already.

But ye muſt know that this Light or knowledge is worth nothing without Love. This ye may ſee if ye call to mind, that though a man may know very well what is virtue or wickedneſs, yet if he doth not love virtue, he is not virtuous, for he obeyeth vice. But if he loveth virtue he followeth after it, and his love maketh him an enemy to wickedneſs, ſo that he will not do or practiſe it, and hateth it alſo in other men; and he loveth virtue ſo that he would not leave a virtue unpractiſed even if he might, and this for no reward, but ſimply for the love of virtue. And to him virtue is its own reward, and he is content therewith, and would take no treaſure or riches in exchange for it. Such an one is already a virtuous man, or he is in the way to be ſo. And he who is a truly virtuous man would not ceaſe to be ſo, to gain the whole world,

yea, he would rather die a miſerable death.

It is the ſame with juſtice. Many a man knoweth full well what is juſt or unjuſt, and yet neither is nor ever will become a juſt man. For he loveth not juſtice, and therefore he worketh wickedneſs and injuſtice. If he loved juſtice, he would not do an unjuſt thing; for he would feel ſuch hatred and indignation towards injuſtice whereever he ſaw it, that he would do or ſuffer anything that injuſtice might be put an end to, and men might become juſt. And he would rather die than do an injuſtice, and all this for nothing but the love of juſtice. And to him, juſtice is her own reward, and rewardeth him with herſelf; and ſo there liveth a juſt man, and he would rather die a thouſand times over than live as an unjuſt man. It is the ſame with truth: a man may know full well what is true or a lie, but if he loveth

not the truth he is not a true man; but if he loveth, it is with truth even as with juſtice. Of juſtice ſpeaketh Iſaiah in the 5th chapter: "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkneſs for light, and light for darkneſs; that put bitter for ſweet, and ſweet for bitter!"

Thus may we perceive that knowledge and light profit nothing without Love. We ſee this in the Evil Spirit; he perceiveth and knoweth good and evil, right and wrong, and the like; but ſince he hath no love for the good that he ſeeth, he becometh not good, as he would if he had any love for the truth and other virtues which he ſeeth. It is indeed true that Love muſt be guided and taught of Knowledge, but if Knowledge be not followed by Love, it will avail nothing. It is the ſame with God and divine things. Let a man know much about God and divine things, nay, dream that he ſeeth and

underſtandeth what God Himſelf is, if he have not Love, he will never become like unto God, or a "partaker of the divine nature." But if there be true Love along with his knowledge, he cannot but cleave to God, and forſake all that is not God or of Him, and hate it and fight againſt it, and find it a croſs and a ſorrow.

And this Love ſo maketh a man one with God, that he can nevermore be ſeparated from Him.

CHAP. XLII.

A Queſtion: whether we can know God and not love Him, and how there are two kinds of Light and Love—a true and a falſe.

HERE is an honeſt queſtion; namely, it hath been ſaid that he who knoweth God and loveth Him not, will never beſaved by his

knowledge; the which ſounds as if we might know God and not love Him. Yet we have ſaid elſewhere, that where God is known, He is alſo loved, and whoſoever knoweth God muſt love Him. How may theſe things agree? Here ye muſt mark one thing. We have ſpoken of two Lights—a True and a Falſe. So alſo there are two kinds of Love, a True and a Falſe. And each kind of Love is taught or guided by its own kind of Light or Reaſon. Now, the True Light maketh True Love, and the Falſe Light maketh Falſe Love; for whatever Light deemeth to be beſt, ſhe delivereth unto Love as the beſt, and biddeth her love it, and Love obeyeth, and fulfilleth her commands.

Now, as we have ſaid, the Falſe Light is natural, and is Nature herſelf. Therefore every property belongeth unto it which belongeth unto nature, ſuch as the Me, the Mine, the Self, and the like; and therefore it muſt needs be deceived

in itſelf and be falſe; for no I, Me, or Mine, ever came to the True Light or Knowledge undeceived, ſave once only; to wit, in God made Man. And if we are to come to the knowledge of the ſimple Truth, all theſe muſt depart and periſh. And in particular it belongeth to the natural Light that it would fain know or learn much, if it were poſſible, and hath great pleaſure, delight and glorying in its diſcernment and knowledge; and therefore it is always longing to know more and more, and never cometh to reſt and ſatisfaction, and the more it learneth and knoweth, the more doth it delight and glory therein. And when it hath come ſo high, that it thinketh to know all things and to be above all things, it ſtandeth on its higheſt pinnacle of delight and glory, and then it holdeth Knowledge to be the beſt and nobleſt of all things, and therefore it teacheth Love to love knowledge and diſcern-

ment as the beſt and moſt excellent of all things. Behold, then knowledge and diſcernment come to be more loved than that which is diſcerned, for the falſe natural Light loveth its knowledge and powers, which are itſelf, more than that which is known. And were it poſſible that this falſe natural Light ſhould underſtand the ſimple Truth, as it is in God and in truth, it ſtill would not loſe its own property, that is, it would not depart from itſelf and its own things. Behold, in this ſenſe there is knowledge, without the love of that which is or may be known.

Alſo this Light riſeth and climbeth ſo high that it vainly thinketh that it knoweth God and the pure, ſimple Truth, and thus it loveth itſelf in Him. And it is true that God can be known only by God. Wherefore as this Light vainly thinketh to underſtand God, it imagineth itſelf to be God, and giveth itſelf out to be God, and wiſheth to be

accounted ſo, and thinketh itſelf to be above all things, and well worthy of all things, and that it hath a right to all things, and hath got beyond all things, ſuch as commandments, laws, and virtue, and even beyond Chriſt and a Chriſtian life, and ſetteth all theſe at nought, for it doth not ſet up to be Chriſt, but the Eternal God. And this is becauſe Chriſt's life is diſtaſteful and burdenſome to nature, therefore ſhe will have nothing to do with it; but to be God in eternity and not man, or to be Chriſt as he was after his reſurrection, is all eaſy, and pleaſant, and comfortable to nature, and ſo ſhe holdeth it to be beſt. Behold, with this falſe and deluded Love, ſomething may be known without being loved, for the ſeeing and knowing is more loved than that which is known.

Further, there is a kind of learning which is called knowledge; to wit, when, through hearſay, or reading, or

great acquaintance with Scripture, ſome fancy themſelves to know much, and call it knowledge, and ſay, "I know this or that." And if you aſk, "How doſt thou know it?" they anſwer, "I have read it in the Scriptures," and the like. Behold, this they call underſtanding and knowing. Yet this is not knowledge, but belief, and many things are known and loved and ſeen only with this ſort of perceiving and knowing.

There is alſo yet another kind of Love, which is eſpecially falſe, to wit, when ſomething is loved for the ſake of a reward, as when juſtice is loved not for the ſake of juſtice, but to obtain ſomething thereby, and ſo on. And where a creature loveth other creatures for the ſake of ſomething that they have, or loveth God, for the ſake of ſomething of her own, it is all falſe Love; and this Love belongeth properly to nature, for nature as nature

can feel and know no other love than this; for if ye look narrowly into it, nature as nature loveth nothing beſide herſelf. On this wiſe ſomething may be ſeen to be good and not loved.

But true Love is taught and guided by the true Light and Reaſon, and this true, eternal and divine Light teacheth Love to love nothing but the One true and Perfect Good, and that ſimply for its own ſake, and not for the ſake of a reward, or in the hope of obtaining anything, but ſimply for the love of Goodneſs, becauſe it is good and hath a right to be loved. And all that is thus ſeen by the help of the True Light muſt alſo be loved of the True Love. Now that Perfect Good, which we call God, cannot be perceived but by the True Light; therefore He muſt be loved wherever He is ſeen or made known.

CHAP. XLIII.

Whereby we may know a Man who is made a partaker of the divine Nature, and what belongeth unto him; and further, what is the token of a False Light, and a False Free-Thinker.

URTHER mark ye; that when the True Love and True Light are in a man, the Perfect Good is known and loved for itself and as itself; and yet not so that it loveth itself of itself and as itself, but the one True and Perfect Good can and will love nothing else, in so far as it is in itself, save the one, true Goodness. Now if this is itself, it must love itself, yet not as itself nor as of itself, but in this wise: that the One true Good loveth the One Perfect Goodness, and the One Perfect Goodness is loved of the One, true and Per-

fect Good. And in this ſenſe that ſaying is true, that "God loveth not Himſelf as Himſelf." For if there were ought better than God, God would love that, and not Himſelf. For in this True Light and True Love there neither is nor can remain any I, Me, Mine, Thou, Thine, and the like, but that Light perceiveth and knoweth that there is a Good which is all Good and above all Good, and that all good things are of one Subſtance in the One Good, and that without that One, there is no good thing. And therefore, where this Light is, the man's end and aim is not this or that, Me or Thee, or the like, but only the One, who is neither I nor Thou, this nor that, but is above all I and Thou, this and that; and in Him all Goodneſs is loved as One Good, according to that ſaying: "All in One as One, and One in All as All, and One and all Good, is loved through the One in One, and for the ſake of

the One, for the love that man hath to the One."

Behold, in such a man must all thought of Self, all self-seeking, self-will, and what cometh thereof, be utterly lost and surrendered and given over to God, except in so far as they are necessary to make up a person. And whatever cometh to pass in a man who is truly godlike, whether he do or suffer, all is done in this Light and this Love, and from the same, through the same, unto the same again. And in his heart there is a content and a quietness, so that he doth not desire to know more or less, to have, to live, to die, to be, or not to be, or anything of the kind; these become all one and alike to him, and he complaineth of nothing but of sin only. And what sin is, we have said already, namely, to desire or will anything otherwise than the One Perfect Good and the One Eternal Will, and apart from and con-

trary to them, or to wiſh to have a will of one's own. And what is done of ſin, ſuch as lies, fraud, injuſtice, treachery, and all iniquity, in ſhort, all that we call ſin, cometh hence, that man hath another will than God and the True Good; for were there no will but the One Will, no ſin could ever be committed. Therefore we may well ſay that all ſelf-will is ſin, and there is no ſin but what ſpringeth therefrom. And this is the only thing which a truly godlike man complaineth of; but to him, this is ſuch a ſore pain and grief, that he would die a hundred deaths in agony and ſhame, rather than endure it; and this his grief muſt laſt until death, and where it is not, there be ſure that the man is not truly godlike, or a partaker of the divine nature.

Now, ſeeing that in this Light and Love, all Good is loved in One and as One, and the One in all things, and in all things as One and as All, therefore

all thoſe things muſt be loved that rightly are of good report; ſuch as virtue, order, ſeemlineſs, juſtice, truth, and the like; and all that belongeth to God in the true Good and is His own, is loved and praiſed; and all that is without this Good, and contrary to it, is a ſorrow and a pain, and is hated as ſin, for it is of a truth ſin. And he who liveth in the true Light and true Love, hath the beſt, nobleſt, and worthieſt life that ever was or will be, and therefore it cannot but be loved and praiſed above any other life. This life was and is in Chriſt to perfection, elſe he were not the Chriſt.

And the love wherewith the man loveth this noble life and all goodneſs, maketh, that all which he is called upon to do, or ſuffer, or paſs through, and which muſt needs be, he doeth or endureth willingly and worthily, however hard it may be to nature. Therefore ſaith Chriſt: "My yoke is eaſy,

and my burden is light.*" This cometh of the love which loveth this admirable life. This we may ſee in the beloved Apoſtles and Martyrs; they ſuffered willingly and gladly all that was done unto them, and never aſked of God that their ſuffering and tortures might be made ſhorter, or lighter or fewer, but only that they might remain ſteadfaſt and endure to the end. Of a truth all that is the fruit of divine Love in a truly godlike man is ſo ſimple, plain and ſtraightforward, that he can never properly give an account of it by writing or by ſpeech, but only ſay that ſo it is. And he who hath it not doth not even believe in it; how then can he come to know it?

On the other hand, the life of the natural man, where he hath a lively, ſubtle, cunning nature is ſo manifold and complex, and ſeeketh and inventeth ſo many turnings and windings and

* Matt. xi. 30.

falſehoods for its own ends, and that ſo continually, that this alſo is neither to be uttered nor ſet forth.

Now, ſince all falſehood is deceived, and all deception beginneth in ſelf-deception, ſo is it alſo with this falſe Light and Life, for he who deceiveth is alſo deceived, as we have ſaid before. And in this falſe Light and Life is found everything that belongeth to the Evil Spirit and is his, inſomuch that they cannot be diſcerned apart; for the falſe Light is the Evil Spirit, and the Evil Spirit is this falſe Light. Hereby we may know this. For even as the Evil Spirit thinketh himſelf to be God, or would fain be God, or be thought to be God, and in all this is ſo utterly deceived that he doth not think himſelf to be deceived, ſo is it alſo with this falſe Light, and the Love and Life that is thereof. And as the Devil would fain deceive all men, and draw them to himſelf and his works, and make them like himſelf, and uſeth

much art and cunning to this end, ſo is it alſo with this falſe Light; and as no one may turn the Evil Spirit from his own way, ſo no one can turn this deceived and deceitful Light from its errors. And the cauſe thereof is, that both theſe two, the Devil and Nature, vainly think that they are not deceived, and that it ſtandeth quite well with them. And this is the very worſt and moſt miſchievous deluſion. Thus the Devil and nature are one, and where nature is conquered the Devil is alſo conquered, and in like manner where nature is not conquered the Devil is not conquered. Whether as touching the outward life in the world, or the inward life of the ſpirit, this falſe Light continueth in its ſtate of blindneſs and falſehood, ſo that it is both deceived itſelf and deceiveth others with it, whereſoever it may.

From what hath here been ſaid, ye may underſtand and perceive more than

hath been expreſſly ſet forth. For whenever we ſpeak of the Adam, and diſobedience, and of the old man, of ſelf-ſeeking, ſelf-will, and ſelf-ſerving, of the I, the Me, and the Mine, nature, falſehood, the Devil, ſin; it is all one and the ſame thing. Theſe are all contrary to God, and remain without God.

CHAP. XLIV.

How nothing is contrary to God but Self-will, and how he who ſeeketh his own Good for his own ſake, findeth it not; and how a Man of himſelf neither knoweth nor can do any good Thing.

NOW, it may be aſked; is there ought which is contrary to God and the true Good? I ſay, No. Likewiſe there is nothing without God, except to will otherwiſe than is willed by the Eternal Will;

that is, contrary to the Eternal Will. Now the Eternal Will willeth that nothing be willed or loved but the Eternal Goodneſs. And where it is otherwiſe, there is ſomething contrary to Him, and in this ſenſe it is true that he who is without God is contrary to God; but in truth there is no Being contrary to God or the true Good.

We muſt underſtand it as though God ſaid: "he who willeth without Me, or willeth not what I will, or otherwiſe than as I will, he willeth contrary to Me, for My will is that no one ſhould will otherwiſe than I, and that there ſhould be no will without Me, and without My will; even as without Me, there is neither Subſtance, nor Life, nor this, nor that, ſo alſo there ſhould be no Will apart from Me, and without My will." And even as in truth all beings are one in ſubſtance in the Perfect Being, and all good is one in the One Being, and ſo forth, and cannot ex-

iſt without that One, ſo ſhall all wills be one in the One Perfect Will, and there ſhall be no will apart from that One. And whatever is otherwiſe is wrong, and contrary to God and His will, and therefore it is ſin. Therefore all will apart from God's will (that is, all ſelf-will), is ſin, and ſo is all that is done from ſelf-will. So long as a man ſeeketh his own will and his own higheſt Good, becauſe it is *his*, and for his own ſake, he will never find it; for ſo long as he doeth this, he is not ſeeking his own higheſt Good, and how then ſhould he find it? For ſo long as he doeth this, he ſeeketh himſelf, and dreameth that he is himſelf the higheſt Good; and ſeeing that he is not the higheſt Good, he ſeeketh not the higheſt Good, ſo long as he ſeeketh himſelf. But whoſoever ſeeketh, loveth, and purſueth Goodneſs as Goodneſs and for the ſake of Goodneſs, and maketh that his end, for nothing but the love of

Goodneſs, not for love of the I, Me, Mine, Self, and the like, he will find the higheſt Good, for he ſeeketh it aright, and they who ſeek it otherwiſe do err. And truly it is on this wiſe that the true and Perfect Goodneſs ſeeketh and loveth and purſueth itſelf, and therefore it findeth itſelf.

It is a great folly when a man, or any creature dreameth that he knoweth or can accompliſh aught of himſelf, and above all when he dreameth that he knoweth or can fulfil any good thing, whereby he may deſerve much at God's hands, and prevail with Him. If he underſtood rightly, he would ſee that this is to put a great affront upon God. But the True and Perfect Goodneſs hath compaſſion on the fooliſh ſimple man who knoweth no better, and ordereth things for the beſt for him, and giveth him as much of the good things of God as he is able to receive. But as we have ſaid afore, he findeth and receiveth not

the True Good ſo long as he remaineth unchanged; for unleſs Self and Me depart, he will never find or receive it.

CHAP. XLV.

How that where there is a Chriſtian Life, Chriſt dwelleth, and how Chriſt's Life is the beſt and moſt admirable Life that ever hath been or can be.

HE who knoweth and underſtandeth Chriſt's life, knoweth and underſtandeth Chriſt himſelf; and in like manner, he who underſtandeth not his life, doth not underſtand Chriſt himſelf. And he who believeth on Chriſt, believeth that his life is the beſt and nobleſt life that can be, and if a man believe not this, neither doth he believe on Chriſt himſelf. And in ſo far as a man's life is according to Chriſt, Chriſt himſelf dwelleth

in him, and if he hath not the one neither hath he the other. For where there is the life of Chriſt, there is Chriſt himſelf, and where his life is not, Chriſt is not, and where a man hath his life, he may ſay with St. Paul, "I live, yet not I, but Chriſt liveth in me."* And this is the nobleſt and beſt life; for in him who hath it, God Himſelf dwelleth, with all goodneſs. So how could there be a better life? When we ſpeak of obedience, of the new man, of the True Light, the True Love, or the life of Chriſt, it is all the ſame thing, and where one of theſe is, there are they all, and where one is wanting, there is none of them, for they are all one in truth and ſubſtance. And whatever may bring about that new birth which maketh alive in Chriſt, to that let us cleave with all our might and to nought elſe; and let us forſwear and flee all that may hinder

* Galatians ii. 20.

it. And he who hath received this life in the Holy Sacrament, hath verily and indeed received Chriſt, and the more of that life he hath received, the more he hath received of Chriſt, and the leſs, the leſs of Chriſt.

CHAP. XLVI.

How entire Satisfaction and true Reſt are to be found in God alone, and not in any Creature; and how he who will be obedient unto God, muſt alſo be obedient to the Creatures, with all Quietneſs, and he who would love God, muſt love all Things in One.

IT is ſaid, that he who is content to find all his ſatisfaction in God, hath enough; and this is true. And he who findeth ſatisfaction in ought which is this and that, findeth it not in God; and he who findeth it in God, findeth it in nothing

elſe, but in that which is neither this nor that, but is All. For God is One and muſt be One, and God is All and muſt be All. And now what is, and is not One, is not God; and what is, and is not All and above All, is alſo not God, for God is One and above One, and All and above All. Now he who findeth full ſatisfaction in God, receiveth all his ſatisfaction from One ſource, and from One only, as One. And a man cannot find all ſatisfaction in God, unleſs all things are One to him, and One is All, and ſome thing and nothing are alike.* But where it ſhould be thus, there would be true ſatisfaction, and not elſe.

Therefore alſo, he who will wholly commit himſelf unto God and be obedient to Him, muſt alſo reſign himſelf to all things, and be willing to ſuffer them,

* Literally *ought* and *nought*, *icht und nicht*; but *ought* means *any* thing, the idea of the original is emphatically *ſome* thing, a part, not the whole.—Tr.

without reſiſting or defending himſelf or calling for ſuccour. And he who doth not thus reſign or ſubmit himſelf to all things in One as One, doth not reſign or ſubmit himſelf to God. Let us look at Chriſt. And he who ſhall and will lie ſtill under God's hand, muſt lie ſtill under all things in One as One, and in no wiſe withſtand any ſuffering. Such an one were a Chriſt. And he who fighteth againſt affliction and refuſeth to endure it, is truly fighting againſt God. That is to ſay, we may not withſtand any creature or thing by force or war, either in will or works. But we may indeed without ſin prevent affliction, or avoid it, or flee from it.

Now, he who ſhall or will love God, loveth all things in One as All, One and All, and One in All as All in One; and he who loveth ſomewhat, this or that, otherwiſe than in the One, and for the ſake of the One, loveth not God, for he loveth ſomewhat which is

not God. Therefore he loveth it more than God. Now he who loveth ſomewhat more than God or along with God, loveth not God, for He muſt be and will be alone loved, and verily nothing ought to be loved but God alone. And when the true divine Light and Love dwell in a man, he loveth nothing elſe but God alone, for he loveth God as Goodneſs and for the ſake of Goodneſs, and all Goodneſs as One, and One as All; for, in truth, All is One and One is All in God.

CHAP. XLVII.

A Queſtion: Whether, if we ought to love all Things, we ought to love Sin alſo?

SOME may put a queſtion here and ſay: "If we are to love all things, muſt we then love ſin too?" I anſwer: No. When I ſay "all things," I mean all Good; and all that is, is good, in ſo far as it hath Being. The Devil is good in ſo far as he hath Being. In this ſenſe nothing is evil, or not good. But ſin is to will, deſire, or love otherwiſe than as God doth. And Willing is not Being, therefore it is not good. Nothing is good except in ſo far as it is in God and with God. Now all things have their Being in God, and more truly in God than in themſelves, and therefore all things are good in ſo far as they have a Being, and if there were aught that

had not its Being in God, it would not be good. Now behold, the willing or desiring which is contrary to God is not in God; for God cannot will or desire anything contrary to Himself, or otherwise than Himself. Therefore it is evil or not good, and is merely nought.

God loveth also works, but not all works. Which then? Such as are done from the teaching and guidance of the True Light and the True Love; and what is done from these and in these, is done in spirit and in truth, and what is thereof, is God's, and pleaseth Him well. But what is done of the false Light and false Love, is all of the Wicked One; and especially what happeneth, is done or left undone, wrought or suffered from any other will, or desire, or love, than God's will, or desire, or love. This is, and cometh to pass, without God and contrary to God, and is utterly contrary to good works, and is altogether sin.

CHAP. XLVIII.

How we muſt believe certain Things of God's Truth beforehand, ere we can come to a true Knowledge and Experience thereof.

CHRIST ſaid, "He that believeth not," or will not or cannot believe, "ſhall be damned." It is ſo of a truth; for a man, while he is in this preſent time, hath not knowledge; and he cannot attain unto it, unleſs he firſt believe. And he who would know before he believeth, cometh never to true knowledge. We ſpeak not here of the articles of the Chriſtian faith, for every one believeth them, and they are common to every Chriſtian man, whether he be ſinful or ſaved, good or wicked, and they muſt be believed in the firſt place, for without that, one cannot come

to know them. But we are ſpeaking of a certain Truth which it is poſſible to know by experience, but which ye muſt believe in, before that ye know it by experience, elſe ye will never come to know it truly. This is the faith of which Chriſt ſpeaketh in that ſaying of His.

CHAP. XLIX.

Of Self-will, and how Lucifer and Adam fell away from God through Self-will.

IT hath been ſaid, that there is of nothing ſo much in hell as of ſelf-will. The which is true, for there is nothing elſe there than ſelf-will, and if there were no ſelf-will there would be no Devil and no hell. When it is ſaid that Lucifer fell from Heaven, and turned away from God and the like, it meaneth nothing elſe than that he would have his own will, and

would not be at one with the Eternal Will. So was it likewiſe with Adam in Paradiſe. And when we ſay Self-will, we mean, to will otherwiſe than as the One and Eternal Will of God willeth.

CHAP. L.

How this preſent Time is a Paradiſe and outer Court of Heaven, and how therein there is only one Tree forbidden, that is, Self-will.

WHAT is Paradiſe? All things that are; for all are goodly and pleaſant, and therefore may fitly be called a Paradiſe. It is ſaid alſo, that Paradiſe is an outer court of Heaven. Even ſo this world is verily an outer court of the Eternal, or of Eternity, and ſpecially what ever in Time, or any temporal things or creatures, manifeſteth or remindeth us of

God or Eternity; for the creatures are a guide and a path unto God and Eternity. Thus this world is an outer court of Eternity, and therefore it may well be called a Paradiſe, for it is ſuch in truth. And in this Paradiſe, all things are lawful, ſave one tree and the fruits thereof. That is to ſay: of all things that are, nothing is forbidden and nothing is contrary to God but one thing only: that is, Self-will, or to will otherwiſe than as the Eternal Will would have it. Remember this. For God ſaith to Adam, that is, to every man, "Whatever thou art, or doeſt, or leaveſt undone, or whatever cometh to paſs, is all lawful and not forbidden if it be not done from or according to thy will, but for the ſake of and according to My will. But all that is done from thine own will is contrary to the Eternal Will."

It is not that every work which is thus wrought is in itſelf contrary to the Eternal Will, but in ſo far as it is

wrought from a different will, or otherwiſe than from the Eternal and Divine Will.

CHAP. LI.

Wherefore God hath created Self-will, ſeeing that it is ſo contrary to Him.

NOW ſome may aſk: "ſince this tree, to wit, Self-will, is ſo contrary to God and the Eternal Will, wherefore hath God created it, and ſet it in Paradiſe?"

Anſwer: whatever man or creature deſireth to dive into and underſtand the ſecret counſel and will of God, ſo that he would fain know wherefore God doeth this, or doeth not that, and the like, deſireth the ſame as Adam and the Devil. For this deſire is ſeldom from ought elſe than that the man taketh delight in knowing, and glorieth therein, and this is ſheer pride. And

ſo long as this deſire laſteth, the truth will never be known, and the man is even as Adam or the Devil. A truly humble and enlightened man doth not deſire of God that He ſhould reveal His ſecrets unto him, and aſk wherefore God doeth this or that, or hindereth or alloweth ſuch a thing, and ſo forth; but he deſireth only to know how he may pleaſe God, and become as nought in himſelf, having no will, and that the Eternal Will may live in him, and have full poſſeſſion of him, undiſturbed by any other will, and how its due may be rendered to the Eternal Will, by him and through him.

However, there is yet another anſwer to this queſtion, for we may ſay: the moſt noble and delightful gift that is beſtowed on any creature is that of perceiving, or Reaſon, and Will. And theſe two are ſo bound together, that where the one is, there the other is alſo. And if it were not for theſe two

gifts, there would be no reaſonable creatures, but only brutes and brutiſhneſs; and that were a great loſs, for God would never have His due, and behold Himſelf and His attributes manifeſted in deeds and works; the which ought to be, and is neceſſary to perfection. Now, behold, Perception and Reaſon are created and beſtowed along with Will, to the intent that they may inſtruct the will and alſo themſelves, that neither perception nor will is of itſelf, nor is nor ought to be unto itſelf, nor ought to ſeek or obey itſelf. Neither ſhall they turn themſelves to their own advantage, nor make uſe of themſelves to their own ends and purpoſes; for His they are from Whom they do proceed, and unto Him ſhall they ſubmit, and flow back into Him, and become nought in themſelves, that is, in their ſelfiſhneſs.

But here ye muſt conſider more particularly, ſomewhat touching the Will.

There is an Eternal Will, which is in God a firſt principle and ſubſtance, apart from all works and effects,* and the ſame will is in Man, or the creature, willing certain things, and bringing them to paſs. For it belongeth unto the Will and is its property that it ſhall will ſomething. What elſe is it for? For it were in vain, unleſs it had ſome work to do, and this it cannot have without the creature. Therefore there muſt be creatures, and God will have them, to the end that the Will may be put in exerciſe by their means, and work, which in God is and muſt be without work. Therefore the will in the creature, which we call a created will, is as truly God's as the Eternal Will, and is not of the creature.

And now, ſince God cannot bring His will into exerciſe, working and cauſing changes, without the creature, therefore it pleaſeth Him to do ſo in and

* Or *realization*, wirklichkeit.

with the creature. Therefore the will is not given to be exerted by the creature, but only by God, who hath a right to work out His own will by means of the will which is in man, and yet is God's. And in whatever man or creature it ſhould be purely and wholly thus, the will would be exerted not by the man but by God, and thus it would not be ſelf-will, and the man would not will otherwiſe than as God willeth; for God Himſelf would move the will and not man. And thus the will would be one with the Eternal Will, and flow out into it, though the man would ſtill keep his ſenſe of liking and diſliking, pleaſure and pain, and the like. For wherever the will is exerted, there muſt be a ſenſe of liking and diſliking; for if things go according to his will, the man liketh it, and if they do not, he diſliketh it, and this liking and diſliking are not of the man's producing, but of God's. [For whatever

is the ſource of the will, is the ſource of theſe alſo.]* Now the will cometh not of man but of God, therefore liking and diſliking come from Him alſo. But nothing is complained of, ſave only what is contrary to God. So alſo there is no joy but of God alone, and that which is His and belongeth unto Him. And as it is with the will, ſo is it alſo with perception, reaſon, gifts, love, and all the powers of man; they are all of God, and not of man. And wherever the will ſhould be altogether ſurrendered to God, the reſt would of a certainty be ſurrendered likewiſe, and God would have His right, and the man's will would not be his own. Behold, therefore hath God created the will, but not that it ſhould be ſelf-will.

Now cometh the Devil or Adam, that is to ſay, falſe nature, and taketh this will unto itſelf and maketh the

* This ſentence is found in Luther's edition, but not in that baſed on the Wurtzburg Manuſcript.

ſame its own, and uſeth it for itſelf and its own ends. And this is the miſchief and wrong, and the bite that Adam made in the apple, which is forbidden, becauſe it is contrary to God. And therefore, ſo long as there is any ſelf-will, there will never be true love, true peace, true reſt. This we ſee both in man and in the Devil. And there will never be true bleſſedneſs either in time or eternity, where this ſelf-will is working, that is to ſay, where man taketh the will unto himſelf and maketh it his own. And if it be not ſurrendered in this preſent time, but carried over into eternity, it may be foreſeen that it will never be ſurrendered, and then of a truth there will never be content, nor reſt, nor bleſſedneſs; as we may ſee by the Devil. If there were no reaſon or will in the creatures, God were, and muſt remain for ever, unknown, unloved, unpraiſed and unhonoured, and all the creatures

would be worth nothing, and were of no avail to God. Behold thus the queſtion which was put to us is anſwered.* And if there were any, who, by my much writing (which yet is brief and profitable in God), might be led to amend their ways, this were indeed well-pleaſing unto God.

That which is free, none may call his own, and he who maketh it his own, committeth a wrong. Now, in the whole realm of freedom, nothing is ſo free as the will, and he who maketh it his own, and ſuffereth it not to remain in its excellent freedom, and free nobility, and in its free exerciſe, doeth a grievous wrong. This is what is done by the Devil and Adam and all their followers. But he who leaveth the will in its noble freedom doeth right, and this doth Chriſt with all his followers. And whoſo robbeth the will of its noble freedom and maketh

* Namely, why God hath created the will.

it his own, must of necessity as his reward, be laden with cares and troubles, with discontent, disquiet, unrest, and all manner of wretchedness, and this will remain andendure in time and in eternity. But he who leaveth the will in its freedom, hath content, peace, rest and blessedness in time and in eternity. Wherever there is a man in whom the will is not enslaved, but continueth noble and free, there is a true freeman not in bondage to any, one of those to whom Christ said: "the truth shall make you free;" and immediately after, he saith: "if the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."*

Furthermore, mark ye that where the will enjoyeth its freedom, it hath its proper work, that is, willing. And where it chooseth whatever it will unhindered, it always chooseth in all things what is noblest and best, and all that is not noble and good it hateth, and findeth to be a grief and offence unto it. And

* John viii. 32—36.

the more free and unhindered the will is, the more is it pained by evil, injuſtice, iniquity, and in ſhort all manner of wickedneſs and ſin, and the more do they grieve and afflict it. This we ſee in Chriſt, whoſe will was the pureſt and the leaſt fettered, or brought into bondage of any man's that ever lived. So likewiſe was Chriſt's human nature the moſt free and ſingle of all creatures, and yet felt the deepeſt grief, pain, and indignation at ſin that any creature ever felt. But when men claim freedom for their own, ſo as to feel no ſorrow or indignation at ſin and what is contrary to God, but ſay that we muſt heed nothing and care for nothing, but be, in this preſent time, as Chriſt was after his reſurrection, and the like;—this is no true and divine freedom ſpringing from the true divine Light, but a natural, unrighteous, falſe, and deceitful freedom, ſpringing from a natural, falſe and deluded light.

Were there no ſelf-will, there would be alſo no ownerſhip. In heaven there is no ownerſhip; hence there are found content, true peace and all bleſſedneſs. If any one there took upon him to call anything his own, he would ſtraightway be thruſt out into hell, and would become an evil ſpirit. But in hell every one will have ſelf-will, therefore there is all manner of miſery and wretchedneſs. So is it alſo here on earth. But if there were one in hell who ſhould get quit of his ſelf-will and call nothing his own, he would come out of hell into heaven. Now, in this preſent time, man is ſet between heaven and hell, and may turn himſelf towards which he will. For the more he hath of ownerſhip, the more he hath of hell and miſery; and the leſs of ſelf-will, the leſs of hell, and the nearer he is to the Kingdom of Heaven. And could a man, while on earth, be wholly quit of ſelf-will and ownerſhip, and ſtand up

free and at large in God's true light, and continue therein, he would be ſure of the Kingdom of Heaven. He who hath ſomething, or ſeeketh or longeth to have ſomething of his own, is himſelf a ſlave, and he who hath nothing of his own, nor ſeeketh nor longeth thereafter, is free and at large, and in bondage to none.

All that hath here been ſaid, Chriſt taught in words and fulfilled in works for three and thirty years, and he teacheth it to us very briefly when he ſaith: "Follow me." But he who will follow him muſt forſake all things, for he renounced all things ſo utterly as no man elſe hath ever done. Moreover, he who will come after him muſt take up the croſs, and the croſs is nothing elſe than Chriſt's life, for that is a bitter croſs to nature. Therefore he ſaith: "And he that taketh not his croſs, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me, and cannot be my diſciple."* But na-

* Matt. x. 38, and Luke xiv. 27.

ture in her falſe freedom, weeneth ſhe hath forſaken all things, yet ſhe will have none of the croſs, and ſaith ſhe hath had enough of it already, and needeth it no longer, and thus ſhe is deceived. For had ſhe ever taſted the croſs ſhe would never part with it again. He that believeth on Chriſt muſt believe all that is here written.

CHAP. LII.

How we muſt take thoſe two Sayings of Chriſt: "No Man cometh unto the Father, but by me," and "No Man cometh unto me, except the Father which hath ſent me draw him."

CHRIST ſaith: "no man cometh unto the Father but by me."* Now mark how we muſt come unto the Father through Chriſt. The man ſhall ſet a watch over him-

* John xiv. 6.

ſelf and all that belongeth to him within and without, and ſhall ſo direct, govern, and guard his heart, as far as in him lieth, that neither will nor deſire, love nor longing, opinion nor thought, ſhall ſpring up in his heart, or have any abiding-place in him, ſave ſuch as are meet for God and would beſeem Him well, if God Himſelf were made Man. And whenever he becometh aware of any thought or intent riſing up within him that doth not belong to God and were not meet for Him, he muſt reſiſt it and root it out as thoroughly and as ſpeedily as he may.

By this rule he muſt order his outward behaviour, whether he work or refrain, ſpeak or keep ſilence, wake or ſleep, go or ſtand ſtill. In ſhort: in all his ways and walks, whether as touching his own buſineſs, or his dealings with other men, he muſt keep his heart with all diligence, leſt he do ought, or turn aſide to ought, or ſuffer ought to ſpring up

or dwell within him or about him, or left anything be done in him or through him, otherwise than were meet for God, and would be possible and seemly if God Himself were verily made Man.

Behold! he, in whom it should be thus, whatever he had within, or did without, would be all of God, and the man would be in his life a follower of Christ more truly than we can understand or set forth. And he who led such a life would go in and out through Christ; for he would be a follower of Christ: therefore also he would come with Christ and through Christ unto the Father. And he would be also a servant of Christ, for he who cometh after him is his servant, as he himself also saith: "If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be."* And he who is thus a servant and follower of Christ, cometh to that place where Christ himself is; that is, unto the Father. As Christ him-

* John xii. 26.

ſelf ſaith: "Father, I will that they alſo, whom thou haſt given me, be with me where I am."* Behold, he who walketh in this path, "entereth in by the door into the ſheep-fold," that is, into eternal life; "and to him the porter openeth;"† but he who entereth in by ſome other way, or vainly thinketh that he would or can come to the Father or to eternal bleſſedneſs otherwiſe than through Chriſt, is deceived; for he is not in the right Way, nor entereth in by the right Door. Therefore to Him the porter openeth not, for he is a thief and a murderer, as Chriſt ſaith.

Now, behold and mark, whether one can be in the right Way, and enter in by the right Door, if one be living in lawleſs freedom or licenſe, or diſregard of ordinances, virtue or vice, order or diſorder, and the like. Such liberty we do not find in Chriſt, neither is it in any of his true followers.

* John xvii. 24. † John x. 1, 3.

CHAP. LIII.

Conſidereth that other ſaying of Chriſt, "No Man can come unto me, except the Father which hath ſent me draw him."

HRIST hath alſo ſaid: "No man cometh unto me, except the Father which hath ſent me draw him."* Now mark: by the Father, I underſtand the Perfect, Simple Good, which is All and above All, and without which and beſides which there is no true Subſtance, nor true Good, and without which no good work ever was or will be done. And in that it is All, it muſt be in All and above All. And it cannot be any one of thoſe things which the creatures, as creatures, can comprehend or underſtand. For whatever the creature, as

* John vi. 44.

creature (that is, in her creature kind), can conceive of and underſtand, is ſomething, this or that, and therefore is ſome ſort of creature. And now if the Simple Perfect Good were ſomewhat, this or that, which the creature underſtandeth, it would not be the All, nor the Only One, and therefore not Perfect. Therefore alſo it cannot be named, ſeeing that is none of all the things which the creature as creature can comprehend, know, conceive, or name. Now behold, when this Perfect Good, which is unnameable, floweth into a Perſon able to bring forth, and bringeth forth the Only-begotten Son in that Perſon, and itſelf in Him, we call it the Father.

Now mark how the Father draweth men unto Chriſt. When ſomewhat of this Perfect Good is diſcovered and revealed within the ſoul of man, as it were in a glance or flaſh, the ſoul conceiveth a longing to approach unto the Perfect

Goodneſs, and unite herſelf with the Father. And the ſtronger this yearning groweth, the more is revealed unto her; and the more is revealed unto her, the more is ſhe drawn toward the Father, and her deſire quickened. Thus is the ſoul drawn and quickened into a union with the Eternal Goodneſs. And this is the drawing of the Father, and thus the ſoul is taught of Him who draweth her unto Himſelf, that ſhe cannot enter into a union with Him except ſhe come unto Him by the life of Chriſt. Behold! now ſhe putteth on that life of which I have ſpoken afore.

Now ſee the meaning of theſe two ſayings of Chriſt's. The one, "no man cometh unto the Father but by me;" that is, through my life, as hath been ſet forth. The other ſaying, "no man cometh unto me except the Father draw him;" that is, he doth not take my life upon him and come after me, except he be moved and drawn of my

Father; that is, of the Simple and Perfect Good, of which St. Paul ſaith: "when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part ſhall be done away." That is to ſay; in whatever ſoul this Perfect Good is known, felt and taſted, ſo far as may be in this preſent time, to that ſoul all created things are as nought compared with this Perfect One, as in truth they are; for beſide or without the Perfect One, is neither true Good nor true Subſtance. Whoſoever then hath, or knoweth, or loveth, the Perfect One, hath and knoweth all goodneſs. What more then doth he want, or what is all that "is in part" to him, ſeeing that all the parts are united in the Perfect, in One Subſtance?

What hath here been ſaid, concerneth the outward life, and is a good way or acceſs unto the true inward life; but the inward life beginneth after this. When a man hath taſted that which is

perfect as far as is possible in this present time, all created things and even himself become as nought to him. And when he perceiveth of a truth that the Perfect One is All and above All, he needs must follow after Him, and ascribe all that is good, such as Substance, Life, Knowledge, Reason, Power, and the like, unto Him alone and to no creature. And hence followeth that the man claimeth for his own neither Substance, Life, Knowledge, nor Power, Doing nor Refraining, nor anything that we can call good. And thus the man becometh so poor, that he is nought in himself, and so are also all things unto him which are somewhat, that is, all created things. And then there beginneth in him a true inward life, wherein from henceforward, God Himself dwelleth in the man, so that nothing is left in him but what is God's or of God, and nothing is left which taketh anything unto itself. And thus God Him-

ſelf, that is, the One Eternal Perfectneſs alone is, liveth, knoweth, worketh, loveth, willeth, doeth and refraineth in the man. And thus, of a truth, it ſhould be, and where it is not ſo, the man hath yet far to travel, and things are not altogether right with him.

Furthermore, it is a good way and acceſs unto this life, to feel always that what is beſt is deareſt, and always to prefer the beſt, and cleave to it, and unite oneſelf to it. Firſt: in the creatures. But what is beſt in the creatures? Be aſſured: that, in which the Eternal Perfect Goodneſs and what is thereof, that is, all which belongeth thereunto, moſt brightly ſhineth and worketh, and is beſt known and loved. But what is that which is of God, and belongeth unto Him? I anſwer: whatever with juſtice and truth we do, or might call good.

When therefore among the creatures the man cleaveth to that which is the

beſt that he can perceive, and keepeth ſteadfaſtly to that, in ſingleneſs of heart, he cometh afterward to what is better and better, until, at laſt, he findeth and taſteth that the Eternal Good is a Perfect Good, without meaſure and number above all created good. Now if what is beſt is to be deareſt to us, and we are to follow after it, the One Eternal Good muſt be loved above all and alone, and we muſt cleave to Him alone, and unite ourſelves with Him as cloſely as we may. And now if we are to aſcribe all goodneſs to the One Eternal Good, as of right and truth we ought, ſo muſt we alſo of right and truth aſcribe unto Him the beginning, middle, and end of our courſe, ſo that nothing remain to man or the creature. So it ſhould be of a truth, let men ſay what they will.

Now on this wiſe we ſhould attain unto a true inward life. And what then further would happen to the ſoul, or would be revealed unto her, and

what her life would be henceforward, none can declare or gueſs. For it is that which hath never been uttered by man's lips, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive.

In this our long diſcourſe, are briefly comprehended thoſe things which ought of right and truth to be fulfilled: to wit, that man ſhould claim nothing for his own, nor crave, will, love, or intend anything but God alone, and what is like unto Him, that is to ſay, the One, Eternal, Perfect Goodneſs.

But if it be not thus with a man, and he take, will, purpoſe, or crave, ſomewhat for himſelf, this or that, whatever it may be, beſide or other than the Eternal and Perfect Goodneſs which is God Himſelf, this is all too much and a great injury, [and hindereth the man from a perfect life; wherefore he can never reach the Perfect Good, unleſs he firſt forſake all things and himſelf firſt of all. For no man

can ſerve two maſters, who are contrary the one to the other; he who will have the one, muſt let the other go. Therefore if the Creator ſhall enter in, the creature muſt depart. Of this be aſſured.]

CHAP. LIV.

How a Man ſhall not ſeek his own, either in Things ſpiritual or natural, but the Honour of God only; and how he muſt enter in by the right Door, to wit, by Chriſt, into Eternal Life.

IF a man may attain thereunto, to be unto God as his hand is to a man, let him be therewith content, and not ſeek further. [This is my faithful counſel, and here I take my ſtand. That is to ſay, let him ſtrive and wreſtle with all his might to obey God and His commandments ſo thoroughly at all times and in all

things, that in him there be nothing, ſpiritual or natural, which oppoſeth God; and that his whole ſoul and body with all their members may ſtand ready and willing for that to which God hath created them; as ready and willing as his hand is to a man, which is ſo wholly in his power, that in the twinkling of an eye, he moveth and turneth it whither he will. And when we find it otherwiſe with us, we muſt give our whole diligence to amend our ſtate; and this from love and not from fear, and in all things whatſoever, ſeek and intend the glory and praiſe of God alone. We muſt not ſeek our own, either in things ſpiritual or in things natural.] It muſt needs be thus, if it is to ſtand well with us. And every creature oweth this of right and truth unto God, and eſpecially man [to whom, by the ordinance of God, all creatures are made ſubject, and are ſervants, that he may be ſubject to and ſerve God only].

Further, when a man hath come ſo far, and climbed ſo high, that he thinketh and weeneth he ſtandeth ſure, let him beware leſt the Devil ſtrew aſhes and his own bad ſeed on his heart, and nature ſeek and take her own comfort, reſt, peace, and delight in the proſperity of his ſoul, and he fall into a fooliſh, lawleſs freedom and licentiouſneſs, which is altogether alien to, and at war with a true life in God. And this will happen to that man who hath not entered, or refuſeth to enter in by the right Way and the right Door (which is Chriſt, as we have ſaid), and imagineth that he would or could come by any other way to the higheſt truth. He may perhaps dream that he hath attained thereunto, but verily he is in error.

And our witneſs is Chriſt, who declareth: "Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the ſheepfold, but climbeth up ſome other way, the ſame is a thief and a robber." *

* John x. 1.

[A thief, for he robbeth God of His honour and glory, which belong to God alone; he taketh them unto himſelf, and ſeeketh and purpoſeth himſelf. A murderer, for he ſlayeth his own ſoul, and taketh away her life, which is God. For as the body liveth by the ſoul, even ſo the ſoul liveth by God. Moreover, he murdereth all thoſe who follow him, by his doctrine and example. For Chriſt ſaith: "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that ſent me."* And again: "Why call ye me Lord, Lord?†" as if he would ſay, it will avail you nothing to Eternal Life. And again: "Not every one that ſaith unto me Lord, Lord, ſhall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in Heaven."‡ But he ſaith alſo: "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments."§

* John vi. 38. † Luke vi. 46.
‡ Matt. vii. 21. § Matt. xix. 17.

And what are the commandments? "To love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy ſoul, and with all thy ſtrength, and with all thy mind; and to love thy neighbour as thyſelf."* And in theſe two commandments all others are briefly comprehended.

There is nothing more precious to God, or more profitable to man, than humble obedience. In His eyes, one good work, wrought from true obedience, is of more value than a hundred thouſand, wrought from ſelf-will, contrary to obedience. Therefore he who hath this obedience need not dread Him, for ſuch a man is in the right way, and following after Chriſt.]

That we may thus deny ourſelves, and forſake and renounce all things for God's ſake, and give up our own wills, and die unto ourſelves, and live unto God alone and to His will, may He help us, who gave up His will to His

* Luke x. 27.

Heavenly Father,—Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, to whom be bleſſing for ever and ever. Amen.

THE END.

C. Whittingham, Tooks Court, Chancery Lane.

Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: Nov. 2005

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